

UFOs: The Psychic Dimension

by David Pratt

1. Introduction

Any light or object that is seen in the atmosphere and is not immediately identifiable is by definition an unidentified flying object, or UFO – which does not necessarily mean an extraterrestrial spacecraft. There have been hundreds of thousands of UFO sightings all over the world during the past 50 years. It is generally agreed that up to 90% of all sightings can be attributed to misidentification of familiar phenomena.

Of the other 10%, some remain unexplained due to lack of sufficient evidence, but in a great many instances there is abundant evidence from reliable witnesses, but no conventional explanation. As Lord Hill-Norton, a former Chief of the British Defense Staff, has said: 'the evidence is now so consistent and so overwhelming that no reasonably intelligent person can deny that something unexplained is going on in our atmosphere'. He criticizes what he calls the 'little green men ha-ha-ha' syndrome – the tendency to dismiss with ridicule a phenomenon that merits careful investigation.

The total number of unexplained UFO cases on record worldwide is well in excess of 100,000. What's more, surveys show that only 1 witness in 10 comes forward to report what they have seen, usually out of fear of ridicule. There are between 5 and 10 thousand reports of close encounters, involving observations of UFO occupants and sometimes interaction with them. Close-encounter reports in particular are often so bizarre and surreal that even many ufologists prefer to ignore their full implications.

Scientists in general have failed miserably to take up the challenge presented by the UFO phenomenon, though there have been several notable exceptions. Many academics who have shown serious interest in UFOs have suffered harassment, intimidation, and desision. A number of prominent scientists have devoted their lives to debunking UFOs.

One of the earliest and severest critics was Harvard astronomer Dr. Donald Menzel. He had a simple, scientific explanation for all UFO sightings: they were caused by temperature inversions. This meterological condition is created when pockets of cold air get trapped in warm air; the difference in density causes lights from the ground to be reflected or refracted. The fact that the theory simply didn't work in most cases did not dampen his enthusiasm.

John Keel writes:

Refracted light from air inversions explained the funny glows in the sky but how did Menzel explain all the car chases, abductions, landings, and weird manifestations? His scientific answer was that all the witnesses were liars, fools, or drunks. That took care of that.

UFOs have been investigated by every major government on earth, and are still being studied at official level in countries such as China, France, Spain, Russia, the US, and the UK. Yet although the military have numerous unexplained cases on record, they have not seen fit to divulge all their data findings. The history of UFO investigations carried out by the US Air Force (Projects Sign, Grudge, Blue Book, and Stork, the Robertson Panel, and the Condon Committee), and the documents released under the Freedom of Information Act since the mid-1970s show that military officials who took UFOs seriously tended to be sidelined, while the debunkers have generally had the upper hand.

However, the military's often-repeated claim that there is nothing unusual to explain is blatantly contradicted by the data assembled in official reports. For example, the 1969 Condon Report concluded that further scientific study of UFOs could not be expected to contribute anything worthwhile to scientific knowledge. Yet by its own admission as many as one third of its cases were unexplained even after in-depth scrutiny. Moreover, some of its proposed 'explanations' were grossly inadequate, as the following case illustrates.

On 30 June 1954 the crew and some of the passengers on a flight from New York to London saw a large cigar-shaped object, constantly changing shape, with 6 smaller black globular objects milling round it. After about 15 minutes the 6 small objects entered the large object, which sped off and disappeared. When the plane landed at Goose Bay, Canada, to refuel, the crew were told there had been several recent UFO sightings in the Labrador area.

The official explanation issued by the Air Ministry in London was that the phenomenon was associated with a solar eclipse – one that had not yet begun when the sighting took place! In 1969 a member of the Condon Committee studied the sighting and suggested it had been a mirage. He admitted there were problems with this explanation, and concluded with the following remarkable statement: 'This unusual sighting should therefore be assigned to the category of some almost certainly natural phenomenon, which is so rare that it apparently has never been reported before or since'.

Following the publication of the Condon Report, all the project's files were destroyed. Edward Condon himself, a professor of physics and astrophysics, lumped UFO studies, spiritualism, and psychical research together as 'pseudoscience', and argued that any publishers or teachers found guilty of presenting pseudoscience as established truth should be 'publicly horsewhipped and forever banned from further activity'!

By the late 1960s the Air Force was tired of the expense and public controversy associated with Project Blue Book, and the Condon Report gave it what it wanted: an excuse to terminate its official involvement in UFO investigations. It is now known that while Project Blue Book was in progress, a classified, extensive UFO investigation known as Project Stork was also being conducted, unknown even to Blue Book personnel. It is widely suspected that covert investigations have continued to the present day.

Some researchers believe that senior military and government officials already know the whole truth about UFOs. The military have allegedly recovered crashed UFOs, test-flown them, carried out autopsies on alien bodies, and even struck a deal with the aliens. According to one claim, all the major technological advances of the past half century derive from captured alien hardware! However, there is a distinct lack of any hard, compelling evidence to support such assertions.

The most famous alleged 'UFO crash' took place near Roswell, New Mexico, in June 1947. There had been several UFO sightings in the preceding weeks, and when unusual debris from a downed object was found on a ranch, the local air base immediately issued a press statement saying that a crashed flying saucer had been recovered. This statement was quickly retracted and the debris was instead said to be the remains of a weather balloon and its radar target.

Little more was heard of the Roswell incident for the next 30 years, when new 'evidence' began to emerge. Today Roswell has assumed mythic proportions in the public imagination. But in a cogent deconstruction of the Roswell legend, Karl Pflock shows it to be a sorry tale of questionable and conflicting claims, dubious witnesses, and blinkered investigators; evidence that at first sight seems substantial invariably evaporates when subjected to close scrutiny.

Secret government documents declassified since 1975 together with the history of US defense programs show beyond reasonable doubt that no 'crashed disc' was retrieved at Roswell.



Left. Debris found near Roswell, June 1947. It includes pieces of plastic-like and rubber-like material, foil-like material, short balsa struts, and parchment-like paper. A week and a half earlier, a 657-foot-tall balloon array, launched from a nearby army air base under a top-secret project code-named 'Mogul', had gone missing in the area. Its balloons, radar-reflectors, parachutes, and other components consisted of the types of material found at Roswell. The device was certainly more than a 'mere weather balloon'. The arrays, equipped with special microphones, were intended to detect Soviet atom bomb tests and to provide early warning of rocket attacks.

However, some people contend that the wreckage only resembles ordinary foil, balsa, plastic, etc., and is actually debris from a crashed flying saucer. It is claimed that the struts and foil possessed unearthly strenght – even though the photos clearly show the debris to consist of shattered and shredded fragments! As time has passed, the Roswell incident has taken a life of its own, spawning additional, contradictory tales about a second and even third crash site, and the recovery and examination of alien bodies.

It appears that some elements of the intelligence community are eager to fuel rumours of a grand conspiracy to keep the public in the dark. They have sometimes gone to elaborate lenghts to spread disinformation by leaking false documents to selected ufologists or by titillating them with 'deep-throat' revelations about 'the coverup'. Tales of crashed spaceships and alien bodies have come primarily from 'former' military intelligence personnel, yet curiously none of them has recieved so much as a slap on the wrist for revealing 'state secrets'. A vocal and influential conspiracy subculture has developed among UFO enthusiasts, possessing its own magical words of power – Roswell, Hangar 18, Majestic 12, and Area 51/Dreamland.*

*Hangar 18 at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base is rumoured to be used for storing recovered alien bodies and crashed discs. Majestic 12 is supposedly a higher-than-top-secret panel of military officers and scientists responsible for overseeing the study of crashed discs and alien corpses. Area 51 at the Nellis Air Force Base in the Nevada desert is another alleged site where crashed discs are stored, reverse-engineered, and test-flown.

But the inordinate amount of time devoted to conspiracy-mongering has done nothing to advance our understanding of the core UFO mystery.

Many researchers think that the military are actually just as much in the dark about what is behind the UFO phenomenon as anybody else but are unwilling to admit it – they are more interested in concealing their ignorance and impotence rather than their knowledge. Scientist Jacques Vallee

says:

UFOs may not be spacecraft at all. And the government may simply be hiding the fact that, in spite of the billions of dollars spent on air defense, it has no more clues to the nature of the phenomenon today than it did in the forties when it began its investigations.

A massive concealment of puzzling data is not the same as a global – or even 'cosmic'! - conspiracy to hide the ultimate truth about UFOs. As we shall see, unless the military have a deep understanding of occult dynamics they are unlikely to have much of a clue as to what UFOs are really about!

The level of official secrecy varies from country to country.

- France, for instance, has an established system of report-collecting by the national police, and the reports are then analyzed by a government-funded team of scientists known as SERPA (formerly GEPAN). However, this group does not seek publicity for fear that some people might find the large number of well-documented but unexplained cases disturbing.
- The Spanish Air Force gradually began to declassify some UFO documents in 1992 after a long process of negotiations beginning in 1978.
- Australian ufologists have been given open access to Australian Air Force UFO files.
- In Belgium the Chief of Operations of the Air Force cooperated with civilian UFO groups and the police in providing radar and other data during the massive wave of UFO sightings in 1989-91.

The astonishing narrow-mindedness that afflicts many scientists when confronted with the UFO phenomenon is illustrated by the following comment by Albert Einstein about UFO witnesses:

'These people have seen something. What it is I do not know and am not curious to know'.

The general failure of official scientific, academic, and governmental bodies to mount a serious, public investigation, means that ufology has attracted many amateurs, and the quality of research is highly uneven. Jacques Vallee comments:

'The field has been overrun by people who don't need to undertake any real research, because they already know all the answers'.

Serious UFO study is also hampered by the media, which almost always want to treat the subject in a jocular or sensationalist manner.

UFO investigators tend to select only those data that fit their preconceived hypotheses. Thus debunkers, who dismiss the idea that there is anything unusual going on, prefer to discuss cases where UFOs turn out to be hoaxes or misidentifications, and then conclude that no further explanation is required. 'Natural' explanations for UFOs include stars, planets, meteorites, satellites, rockets, flares, guided missiles, weather balloons, conventional aircraft, unmanned aerial vehicles, birds, and optical illusions. However, debunkers' tortuous attempts to explain away more challenging cases can be very entertaining.

Most mainstream ufologists believe that UFOs are nuts-and-bolts spacecraft piloted by flesh-and-blood visitors from other planets, who are carrying out a reconnaissance of the earth. They therefore focus on sightings of apparently solid, highly advanced spacecraft reported by well-qualified pilots and military personnel and then conclude that we are dealing with advanced extraterrestrial technology. Cases that don't fit into the extraterrestrial straitjacket and wilder details of cases its

supporters do report are distorted or suppressed to avoid discrediting witnesses and the hypothesis.

For although UFOs are sometimes physical enough to be tracked by radar, to interact with their surroundings, and to be seen by hundreds of people at the same time, the wide range of paranormal phenomena involved in close encounters suggest that we are confronted with visitations from the psychic world rather than from other planets.

2. UFOs Past and Present

Throughout recorded history, people have reported seeing strange objects in the sky.

In ancient and medieval times portents and objects in the sky were taken more or less as a matter of fact, perhaps because there was no known human air traffic at the time with which to confuse them. ... The Assyrians saw flying bulls, ancient Greeks and Arabs saw flying horses, the opulent Persians thought they saw flying carpets, the warlike Romans watched flying shields and spears and whole battles in the sky at the very moment that they themselves were engaged in earthly combat.

As the ancient world became Christianized, the aerial sightings became fiery crosses and other threatening signs of doom foretelling plagues and disasters. ... When the Renaissance opened up people's minds to the exploration of the world, UFOs appropriately took the forms of galleys and caravels, and then, as the French first began experimenting with balloons, certain vast globes were seen floating in the upper heavens.

The most ancient detailed sighting comes from the royal annals of the pharaoh Thutmose III, about 3450 years ago. One morning, a huge fiery circle, some 50 meters across, was seen in the sky. It made no sound but emitted a foul odour, and caused great consternation. A few days later, in the evening, numerous similar fiery circles appeared, and the pharaoh and his army watched them move towards the south, shining brighter than the sun. On this occasion 'fishes and volatiles' fell from the sky.

According to the Anglo Saxon Chronicle, in 793 AD 'terrible portents appeared in Northumbria [England], and miserably afflicted the inhabitants; these were exceptional flashes of lightning, and fiery dragons were seen flying in the air, and soon followed a great famine'. In the 13th century Albertus Magnus challenged the idea that lights in the sky were literally fire-breathing dragons and argued that the phenomenon probably involved ascending and descending 'vapours' that burned and gave off smoke.

Luminous phenomena seem to have been commonplace in the Japanese skies during the Middle Ages. On 27 October 1180 an unusual luminous object described as an 'earthenware vessel' flew from a mountain in the Kii province beyond the northeast mountain of Fukuhara at midnight. After a while, the object changed course and was lost to sight at the southern horizon, leaving a luminous trail.

On 24 September 1235, while General Yoritsume was camping with his army, mysterious sources of light were suddenly seen to swing and circle in the southwest, moving in loops until the early morning. The General ordered what we would now call a 'full-scale scientific investigation'. His consultants finally reported that the event had a completely natural explanation: it was only the wind making the stars sway! (Nowadays the arguments used by official 'experts' to debunk such

phenomena may sound more sophisticated, but they can be just as vacuous!)

Western Europe, too, had its share of strange flying objects and celestial manifestations in the Middle Ages, including 'bearded, hairy comets, torches, flames, columns, spears, shields, dragons, duplicate moons, suns, and other similar things'. A Latin document found at Byland Abbey in Yorkshire, England, describes an incident in 1290 when a 'round, flat, silver object' flew over the monastery exciting 'maximum terror' among the monks. A German publication from 1493 describes how a cigar-shaped object surrounded by flames flew in a straight path through the sky from south to east, then turned towards the setting sun.

In Nuremberg in 1561 and Basil in 1566, witnesses reported seeing large aerial 'tubes' from which spheres and discs emerged and appeared to fight each other in aerial dances.

Right. A medieval representation of a flaming celestial object. From an incunabulum dated 1493 (courtesy of Jacques Vallee).



Nostradamus reported that on 1 February 1554 hundreds of French people in Provence saw a large, bright fire in the form of a 'burning rod or torch' flying from east to west, emitting sparks and flames, and leaving a fiery trail. Its size was estimated at 200 meters. It flew 'as rapidly as an arrow', with a loud rustling sound, and leaves and trees moved to and fro as if shaken by a violent storm. It then changed direction and headed south towards the sea. The sighting lasted some 20 minutes.

The following report was entered into the records of a Russian monastery in August 1663. A great sound was heard in the heavens and many people emerged from the church in the village of Roboziero to see a large ball of fire, which passed over the church towards a lake. It measured some 140 feet in diameter and emitted 2 fiery beams. The object came back twice over the next couple of hours, and fishermen in a boat on the lake were severely burned by the heat. The witnesses regarded the event as a sign from God.

On 5 December 1737 an astronomer from Sheffield, England, observed 'the apparition of a dark red cloud, below which was a luminous body which emitted intense beams of light'. The light beams moved slowly for a while, then stopped, and intense heat was felt. A similar object was seen the same day in Ireland and then in Romania, where it stayed still for 2 hours, separated into 2 parts which then rejoined, and finally disappeared towards the west. In the evening of 26 December 1785, Edinburgh was illuminated as bright as day by a sphere with a sort of cone-shaped attachment, which was seen from a number of distant places.

One January evening in 1878, a man in Texas saw a fast-moving object in the southern sky. When it passed overhead, he noted its resemblance to a 'large saucer'. From November 1896 to May 1897 newspapers all across America were filled with hundreds of stories about mysterious 'airships' – over 6 years before the first heavier-than-air flight by the Wright brothers. They included cigar-shaped craft and mechanical birds with giant wings (which reportedly flapped in some cases). The sightings included reports of human crews and bright searchlight beams at night. No such man-made craft existed at the time.

In 1904-05 a series of sightings of lightballs and other luminous phenomena took place around 2 small villages in Wales. They became associated with a religious revival, and were seen as divine signs by the local populace. In 1909 a wave of airship sightings occurred in Great Britain, the US, New Zealand, and Australia. Most of the British sightings were of torpedo-shaped vessels moving at a 'tremendous pace', with flashing lights and searchlights. Another airship wave erupted across Europe in the autumn of 1912. As before, the airships were capable of hovering and moving at great speeds, even against the wind. Unidentified cigar-shaped objects have continued to be reported ever since then, though they are no longer called 'airships'.

One evening in 1917, 2 women and their children were walking home across a field in the American state of Maine, when a huge silent object suddenly appeared overhead, emitting hues of red, blue, green, and yellow, and causing the witnesses to take to their heels. In 1926 a stunt pilot was startled to see 'six things that looked like huge shiny manhole covers' circling his airplane while en route to Colorado.

Between 1933 and 1937 mysterious, conventionally shaped, unmarked aircraft appeared over Scandinavia and, to lesser extent, the US and Britain. The 'ghost fliers' flew very low, projecting powerful searchlights onto the ground. And although engine noises were generally heard, the aircraft sometimes performed low-level manoeuvres in complete silence. They frequently flew in heavy fogs and blizzards – conditions that would have grounded most biplanes of the day. The governments of Sweden, Norway, and Finland launched large-scale investigations but failed to find a satisfactory explanation for all the sightings.

During the Second World War, Allied pilots in both the European and Pacific theatres were confronted with what they called 'foo fighters', which followed and sometimes buzzed their planes. They usually took the form of small orange balls of light, but sometimes small discs – some translucent – and occasionally larger phenomena. They occurred singly and in formations. The pilots' fears that they were secret enemy weapons eventually dissipated because the objects failed to carry out any aggressive action. German pilots reported the same curious phenomena near their aircraft and assumed they were Allied weapons. 'Foo fighters' were seen again during the Korean war, and aircraft pilots today continue to encounter strange balls of light, which often appear to play games with them.

In 1946 over 2000 reports of 'ghost rockets' and other unidentified flying objects were reported by witnesses in Finland, Norway, Sweden, and Denmark, followed by reports from Portugal, Morocco, Italy, Greece, and India. The 'rockets' left fiery trails and sometimes performed fantastic manoeuvres, crossing the sky at tremendous velocity, diving and climbing, though at other times they proceeded in a leisurely manner. Some of them were seen to crash into lakes with great explosions, but detailed searches failed to find any wreckage. These objects were thought to be of Soviet origin, perhaps test vehicles built by captured German rocket scientists, while the Soviets themselves suspected the Americans.

On 25 June 1947, businessman Kenneth Arnold was flying his private plane over Mount Rainier in the state of Washington, when he spotted 9 shining objects flying in formation at high speed. He

compared their motion to that of 'a saucer skipping over water'. Soon afterwards a headline writer coined the phrase 'flying saucer' and – thanks to widespread media coverage – the modern UFO age was born. Ironically, the objects Arnold saw were not disc-shaped but heel-shaped, with the rounded end pointing in the direction of motion. Over a year earlier, in May 1946, UFO sightings were recorded in the former Soviet Union. The observations included landings, thereby contradicting the theory that landings belong solely to a 'later phase' of the phenomenon.

A key feature of the UFO phenomenon is that sightings occur in waves, with brief peaks followed by longer periods of lesser activity. A wave of sighting – mainly of daylight discs – occurred in the US in the summer of 1947 following Arnold's initial report. The immediate concern was whether they might be Soviet technology, but by the end of the year this possibility had been virtually eliminated. The next major outbreak of sightings occurred in the US during the summer of 1952, with reports following worldwide. At the height of the flap, the US Air Force was receiving 200 reports a day. This wave was dominated by reports of nocturnal lights, and included radar/visual sightings over Washington National Airport on 2 consecutive weekends in late July.

A major UFO wave took place during September to November 1954. Activity centered in both South America and Europe, but concentrated mainly in France and Italy. In a large percentage of the French cases, mainly oval or elliptical UFOs appeared on the ground in association with small humanoid entities. Numerous cigar-shaped UFOs were also reported in France during the same period. In November 1957, UFOs were back over the US with a vengeance. Several witnesses reported that their car headlights and engines failed when a UFO was present but returned to normal when it departed.

Another wave began in the US in the fall of 1965, continuing into 1966, and yet another in October 1973. UFO activity continued in Australia and Europe into 1974. The 1973-74 wave was one of the biggest in UFO history; thousands of people across the US reported distant and high-level silvery discs, nocturnal meandering lights, car-chasing incidents, instances of UFOs interfering with mechanical and electromagnetic equipment, UFO landings that left traces behind, frightened animals, and had physical and psychological effects on humans, and occupant sightings. The autumn of 1978 saw another flap over Italy, Australia, and South America.

From 1982 to 1987, the Hudson Valley area of New York was haunted by reports of lighted boomerang-shaped UFOs, allegedly as wide as several football fields. They were seen by over 5000 witnesses, sometimes hundreds of witnesses on a single night. Around the same time, Brazilians were reporting relatively small, refrigerator-shaped UFOs which emitted burning beams of light. The former Soviet Union experienced a major UFO wave in 1989-90; earlier waves had occurred in 1966-67 and 1977-79.

A spectacular UFO wave struck in Belgium between November 1989 and April 1991. There were some 3500 sightings of giant, dark-coloured, triangular-shaped UFOs, often flying silently at low speeds and altitudes. They were seen by a total of about 10,000 people, and by as many as 100 people at a time.

Reports of alien beings emerging from landed craft have been around since the beginning of the modern UFO age, but have tended to increase as time has passed. They met with great resistance from early ufologists, who tended to suppress them for fear of jeopardizing their chances of winning official backing for a public investigation of UFO sightings. Needless to say, human encounters with a wide variety of otherworldly entities, from 'divine' to 'demonic', have been reported throughout history, and interpreted in the light of the prevailing religious or scientific beliefs. Some ancient reports mention flying beings or associate entities seen on the ground with aerial objects or bright lights.

A 9th-century French text describes how 3 men and a woman were seen descending from a 'cloud ship' in Lyons, France. They said they had been taken on board by beings called sylphs from Magonia, a magical land located somewhere in the sky. The local populace regarded them as evil magicians and were about to cast them into the fire when the Bishop of Lyons, Agobard, saved them by denying the reality of sylphs, magicians, and Magonia.

Reports of encounters with humanlike entities occurred during the airship sightings in the US in 1896-97, and included attempted abductions. In 1914 a German bakery worker saw a cigar-shaped object hovering just above the ground. 4 or 5 little humanoids, 1.2 meters tall, were standing next to it, and then entered it by a ladder. The object rose vertically without making a sound and disappeared.

One afternoon in the spring of 1928, a 17-year-old American was driving along a country road when he saw an object coming into view in the sky. It appeared to be a metallic hexagon with a domed top, 22 feet wide and 7 feet high. Rivets could be seen at the edge of the craft. It had a window in which he saw the head and upper torso of a man in a dark-blue uniform, who 'would pass for an Italian in this world'. The object moved very slowly but did not stop. The occupant looked towards the car, then the object rotated, flew across the road, and abruptly went off at 'terrific speed'.

In the summer of 1948 in the German province of Sauerland, a man was looking after his sheep in some woods when suddenly they scattered in panic. He heard a rushing sound and saw an object, 30 meters long and about 3 meters high, emerge in front of him from what looked like an 'artificial fog', and land on the grass. When the man touched it, a strong electric shock knocked him to the ground. He lay unconscious for a while, then awoke some 80 meters from where he had collapsed.

All around him stood entities about 1 meter tall with large heads, big slanting eyes, and short, stubby hair. In front of their chests they carried boxes with tubes hanging down, which they put into their mouths from time to time. They spoke to each other in an unknown language. Next to the craft, which was still enveloped in mist, stood another 4 or 5 humanoids, who were examining the soil or grass and collecting samples. Finally all the beings got into the craft, which emitted a high-pitched whining sound and flew rapidly away.

At the place where it had landed the man discovered 6 to 8 circular areas of burnt grass in a line, 2 to 4 meters apart, and about 1 meter in diameter.

In the early 1950s some flamboyant figures began to claim ongoing contact with benevolent, handsome, Nordic-looking 'space brothers' from Venus, Mars, and other planets. Prominent contactees included George Adamski, Daniel Fry, Howard Menger, George Van Tassel, Truman Bethurum, and Orfeo Angelucci. Through these 'ambassadors', the space brothers allegedly wanted to warn humanity of the dangers of nuclear energy, and to spread their message of peace and brotherhood.

'Physical contactees' such as Adamski received messages in face-to-face encounters, while 'psychic contactees' such as Van Tassel received messages via dreams, automatic writing, voices in the head, or visions. The contactee movement continues to this day, though on a much smaller scale. For instance, Swiss farmer Billy Meier claims to be in contact with beings from the Pleiades. They include Semjase, who is said to be over 400 years old and to visit earth regularly to buy cosmetics.

Some contactees claimed they had been taken on rides in saucers to other planets.

- Adamski reported that he saw forests, mountains, lakes, and even people on the moon, and

- inhabited cities, snow-capped mountains, and vegetation on Venus.
- Menger's encounters are the most bizarre of all. On one occasion he gave some of the female aliens some bras, only to be told they did not wear such garments. He also claimed he would regularly cut the aliens' long hair so they could move around on earth without attracting attention. In exchange he was taken on a trip to the moon, where he claimed that the atmosphere was similar to earth's. He said he had brought back some 'lunar potatoes', which were subsequently confiscated by the government!
- Angelucci claimed to have met Jesus, who revealed he was an extraterrestrial. Some contactees said the space people had enabled them to do some time travelling.

Most researchers dismiss the whole contactee phenomenon as bunk. But although some hoaxing may have been involved, the absurdity of many of the tales could also mean that the contactees were simply reporting what they sincerely believed they had experienced.

Many researchers found the flood of alien contact stories emerging from Western Europe and South America in 1954 much more difficult to dismiss. The aliens were often seen repairing their craft or collecting rock, soil, or water samples. In contrast to the friendly space brothers, these aliens tended to be short and sometimes rather aggressive, often paralyzing witnesses with beams of light.

For instance, at about 10:30 PM on 10 September 1954, Marius Dewilde was alerted by the sound of his dog howling and trying to get inside his house near the French village of Quarouble, not far from Valenciennes. When he went outside he saw a dark mass sitting on the railroad tracks. He then saw 2 beings, less than 1 meter tall, wearing huge helmets and diving suits.

He started to move towards them, but a bright light from the craft paralyzed him. The creatures hurried back to the craft, there was a loud whistling sound, and the object rose into the sky emitting 'thick dark steam'. Later examination showed depressions in the railroad ties that suggested a craft weighing 35 tons had been standing there.

In a number of cases during the 1954 wave, the creatures seem to have been trying to abduct the witnesses. In Brazil, 2 boys who had been hunting were attacked by 4 small hairy creatures who tried to drag off one of the boys. In Venezuela, Jesus Paz walked into some bushes and began to scream. When his friends came to his aid, they saw a hairy creature run off and escape in a disc-shaped object.

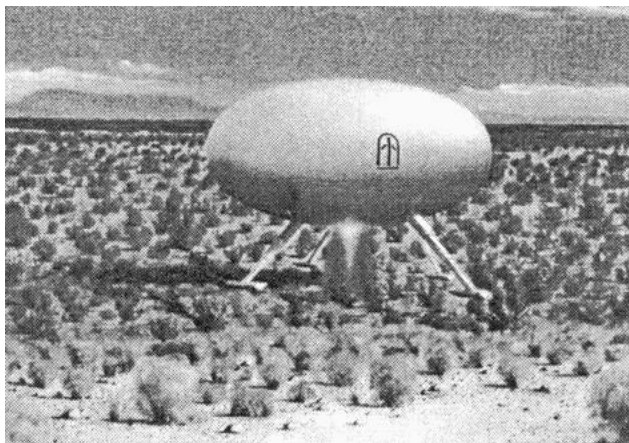
In another case from Venezuela, four 3-foot-tall hairy dwarfs stepped out of a hovering UFO and attempted to abduct a young man. His companion struck one of the entities on the head with his gun butt, which splintered as if it had collided with solid rock. These witnesses were able to fight off their attackers, in contrast to modern reports in which victims report being unable to resist the alien abduction attempts.

In the decade and a half that followed, several highly significant cases occurred that convinced many investigators that occupant reports were not only real but potentially threatening. The first was the abduction of Antonio Villas-Boas in Brazil in 1957, apparently for sexual purposes. The tale was considered so absurd even by UFO researchers that it was not written up in English until the mid-1960s. By then a second landmark abduction case occurred, that of Betty and Barney Hill in New Hampshire in September 1961. It bore many similarities to the Villas-Boas story, but did not reach the press until 1965.

On 24 April 1964 a third landmark close encounter occurred. Police officer Lonnie Zamora was on patrol on the outskirts of Socorro, New Mexico, when he heard a loud roaring noise and saw a blue tapering flame low on the horizon.

He drove at once to the location and saw what he thought was an overturned car. When he got out of his car, he saw 2 small people in white coveralls near the object, which was white, metallic, and egg-shaped. When they saw him, they scrambled inside their craft, and moments later it lifted off with a roar, emitting a flame. Left behind were a burning bush and impressions of the landing gear. Other witnesses reported seeing a mysterious flame or hearing a deafening noise. The FBI, CIA, and Air Force all became involved, but the case was never solved.

Thanks to such high-caliber cases, by the late 1960s the reality of UFO-related entities was no longer such a taboo subject.



Left. Artist's interpretation of the UFO observed by Lonnie Zamora, April 1964.

Abductions or attempted abductions were initially extremely rare, numbering about one a year, but they began to increase during the 1973 wave, and have multiplied in recent decades, until today some UFO organizations are interested in little else. In the 1970s, abductees often reported encountering UFOs on lonely roads, and later recalled under hypnosis that they had been abducted.

The first report of a bedroom abduction occurred in 1973, and nowadays bedroom encounters are standard. Abductees claim that little gray beings with large black eyes take them against their will to a secret location, usually assumed to be a spacecraft, though it is rarely seen from the outside. They sometimes claim that they pass through solid walls and doors in a beam of light, and that spouses and others in the house are 'switched off' so they will not notice the abduction.

They report undergoing painful medical examinations, often including the collection of sperm and ova, supposedly to produce alien-human hybrids. They often communicate with the aliens telepathically. As might be expected, such claims have generated intense controversy.

Of course, what witnesses report is one thing – the reality of the experience, and its meaning, are a different matter! What is certain is that the complexity and diversity of the UFO phenomenon rule out the possibility that there is a single, straightforward explanation that fits every case.

3. Extraterrestrial versus 'Extradimensional'

According to the popular extraterrestrial hypothesis, UFOs are 'somebody else's spacecraft'. The earth is allegedly being visited by beings from other solar systems who are carrying out a survey of our planet and its inhabitants. Various objections have been raised to this hypothesis.

The possibility that there are numerous intelligent civilizations in our galaxy is now widely accepted. The SETI project is trying to detect their presence by analyzing radio signals from space. Some scientists, however, argue that alien civilizations must be very rare or even nonexistent because if they were as numerous as commonly believed, the earth should have been visited by several of them by now; these scientists dismiss the idea that UFOs are extraterrestrial spacecraft.

Those who believe that aliens are already here are often asked why the visitors don't land on the White House lawn. One possible answer is that they have got more sense! Others argue that there is no need to as the aliens have already struck a secret deal with the authorities! A more common argument is that the aliens are obeying a 'prime directive' not to interfere in earth affairs – though this is clearly contradicted by the enormous impact the UFO phenomenon had had on human society over the past 50 years, if not the past several millennia.

There could conceivably be obstacles preventing humanlike lifeforms from surviving a journey through interstellar space, but none are known at present. It has, however, been argued that UFOs cannot come from another solar system because the enormous distances involved are prohibitive. However, even with our present technology it is possible to travel to another star, though it would take numerous generations.

Moreover, some alien civilizations could have developed technologies far in advance to those of earth. And although standard relativity theory forbids faster-than-light travel, reality may not. Just as sound waves cannot propel an object to supersonic speeds, so electromagnetic forces cannot accelerate objects to superluminal speeds. What gravity control may yet achieve, remains to be seen.

Another objection to the ET hypothesis is that it is highly improbable that intelligent lifeforms on other planets would be humanoid in appearance and display human emotions. Others disagree and argue that since the basic human form is highly functional and efficient, it could be fairly common in the universe.*

*According to theosophy, every mature sun has a family of planets, and kingdoms corresponding to those on earth will evolve on every planet, though at any one time only one kingdom is dominant on each of the 12 globes (located on 7 different cosmic planes) making up a complete 'planetary chain'. The 'human' kingdoms on the 7 'secret planets' of our own solar system (i.e. those most closely related to earth) are said to approximate our own form to some extent.

It is also speculated that extraterrestrials may have played a role in genetically engineering the human race, or that they have genetically modified themselves in order to make themselves more humanlike – though given their rather 'alien' appearances, the attempt does not seem to have been a complete success!

A stronger objection is that it is unlikely that intelligent beings from other planets would be adapted to our own gravity or be able to breathe our own atmosphere.

We are in no position to absolutely rule out the possibility that the earth has been or is being visited by one or more extraterrestrial humanlike races. However, it is estimated that there may have been over a million UFO landings in the past half century – a number that far exceeds the requirements for a sophisticated survey of our planet. Moreover, a single, small probe orbiting 1000 miles above the earth would be able to capture in a few weeks most of the important facts about the planet's geography, weather, vegetation, and culture.

Another major problem facing the ET hypothesis is the incredible diversity of UFOs and their occupants. Is it realistic to think that dozens or even hundreds of extraterrestrial races are visiting earth simultaneously? A further problem is the often weird behaviour of UFO entities. Many have

been reported to appear and disappear abruptly and to float through the air.

In addition, it is difficult to believe that extraterrestrials have travelled all this way to do strange things that witnesses have described: these include chasing cars and aircraft, terrifying people, talking nonsense, collecting soil and rock samples, and kidnapping and violating people. Our 'extraterrestrial' visitors have even been known to do a spot of rabbit poaching, as the following case illustrates.

On 14 November 1954, at Isola, Italy, a farmer saw a bright, cigar-shaped object land nearby. 3 small beings in metallic diving suits got out, and centered their attention on rabbits in a cage while speaking to one another in an unknown language. Thinking they were going to steal the animals, the farmer aimed a rifle at the intruders, but it failed to fire and the witness suddenly felt too weak he had to drop the gun. The beings took the rabbits and their craft departed, leaving a bright trail. The farmer then found himself able to move again.

If we adopt the ET hypothesis, alien abductions, too, are thoroughly absurd. The aliens supposedly have a science that allows them to cross light years of space in craft that outperform our best jet fighters. Yet they are apparently such poor doctors that they are unable to draw blood, collect sperm and ova, or take tissue samples from patients without leaving scars, and inflicting pain and trauma.

As Jacques Vallee says, 'The ufonauts should go back to medical school'.

The claim by some abduction researchers that the aliens may have already abducted several million Americans verges on the grotesque. And since some abductees claim to have been abducted dozens of times, it is strange that no one has noticed the busy UFO traffic over American cities that this would entail. It is also curious that aliens prefer to abduct white middle-class Americans while largely ignoring the rest of the world!

Since aliens can supposedly pass through solid objects, why don't they just raid a blood bank, a sperm bank, and a collection of embryos at some major research laboratory? In fact, genetic material recovered from just 2 adults would be enough to create hundreds if not thousands of hybrids in a laboratory. Furthermore, the aliens' alleged attempt to erect mental blocks in the minds of the victims to prevent us from learning of their activities are so pathetic that even an amateur hypnotist can break through them, whereas there are drugs available on earth that could do the job much more efficiently.

Other behaviour incompatible with the hypothesis that aliens are members of a sophisticated extraterrestrial civilization is animal mutilations – a phenomenon which many ET believers prefer to dismiss or ignore.

In these disturbing incidents, carcasses of animals, usually cattle, have been found with vital organs such as eyes, tongues, udders, genitals, or rectum having been removed, often with 'surgical precision'. In many cases blood has been completely drained from the animal, with no traces on the surrounding ground. Sometimes the cattle appear to have been lifted to a height above the ground and then smashed by being dropped.

Such incidents first became prominent in the late 1960s and have been reported in Mexico, Panama, Puerto Rico, Brazil, Europe, the Canary Islands, and Australia, as well as in the US. Some mutilations might be the work of animal predators, but the latter do not produce long, clean cuts of the kind seen on some mutilated animals. And the number of incidents appears to be too high for satanic cults alone to be responsible. The lack of footprints or predator tracks also undermines these explanations.

Moreover, on some occasions strange lights and UFOs have been observed at the scene. In 1983, a couple in Missouri watched through binoculars while 2 small, silver-suited beings somehow paralyzed a black cow and then levitated it out of the pasture and into a cone-shaped craft and disappeared.

Sometimes mysterious helicopters are seen overhead that appear to be illusions; 2 of them are occasionally seen flying with their rotors meshed together like eggbeaters! Clearly animal mutilations must be the work of very negative forces. Some ET enthusiasts concede that certain aliens may be ill-disposed towards humans – and towards cows, too, by the sound of things!

Jacques Vallee is a vocal opponent of the ET hypothesis, and advocates the 'intradimensional', 'interdimensional', 'transdimensional', or 'parallel universe' interpretation of UFOs. He argues that since UFOs have been seen from time immemorial, and 'alien' entities have always behaved in similar ways, it is unreasonable to assume that they must be extraterrestrial visitors. The ET explanation, he says, 'is too simple-minded to account for the diversity of the reported behavior of the occupants and their perceived interactions with human beings'.

He writes:

[A] UFO is both a physical entity with mass, inertia, volume, and physical parameters that we can measure, and a window into another reality. ... [They] need not represent a visitation from space visitors, but something even more interesting: a window toward undiscovered dimensions of our own environment.

The phenomenon has stable, invariant features ... But we have also had to note carefully the chameleon-like character of the secondary attributed of the sightings: the shapes of the objects, the appearance of their occupants, and their reported statements vary as a function of the cultural environment into which they are projected.

The UFOs are physical manifestations that simply cannot be understood apart from their psychic and symbolic reality.

The patterns of close encounters, contacts, and abductions are not specific to our century, contrary to what most American ufologists have assumed. In fact, it is difficult to find a culture that does not have a tradition of little people that fly through the sky and abduct humans. Often they take their victims into spherical settings that are evenly illuminated, and they subject them to various ordeals that include operations on internal organs and astral trips to unknown landscapes. Sexual or genetic interaction is a common theme in this body of folklore.

I propose to regard the UFO phenomenon as a physical manifestation of a form of consciousness that is alien to humans but is able to coexist with us on the earth.

[The] UFO phenomenon is able to act upon the minds of human beings, to induce thoughts and images that are similar to those described by people who have had near-death or out-of-body experiences and even to medieval witnesses of demons and elves.

Saying that aliens emerge from other 'dimensions' raises the question of what sort of 'dimension' are being referred to. It is very fashionable nowadays for physicists to speculate about additional dimensions. M-theory, for example, postulates 7 extra spatial dimensions, which are said to be curled up so small (10⁻³³ centimeters) that they are undetectable. But these are just mathematical abstractions for which there is not a shred of evidence.

They certainly do not resemble the other planes of energy-substance spoken of in the occult tradition. These planes, which are beyond our range of perception, interpenetrate our own physical world, and are said to be inhabited by a variety of entities. Interestingly, the same scientists who fantasize about extra 'dimensions' usually reject any talk of paranormal and otherworldly phenomena out of hand.

In its broadest sense, a 'dimension' is any measurable quantity. Examples are length, breadth, and height, which are commonly referred to as the three 'spatial' dimensions. Other dimensions are temperature, mass, charge, time, etc. If entities are said to be living in other 'dimensions', an obvious question is: how many spatial dimensions do these other 'dimensions' have?

Some researchers actually speak of a three-dimensional parallel universe existing in a superior 'dimension'. This clearly shows that the word 'dimension' is being used in different senses. It is therefore better to speak of other (invisible) worlds, realms, planes, etc. than of other dimensions. Moreover, common sense dictates that no entities or objects, on any plane, can have fewer than three spatial dimensions; nor is there any reason to suppose that they can have more than three.

Vallee seems to have great faith in current 'scientific' speculations that space can be 'folded' so that it might be possible to travel from point A to point B almost instantaneously via a 'wormhole' whose length is only a fraction of the distance between A and B! Equally irrational is the claim that aliens could not just be from 'any place' but also from 'any time' – past, present, or future! There is nothing to suggest that time travel is anything more than science fiction.

Everything that happens is part of a sequence of events linked by cause and effect; the succession of cause and effect defines the direction of time. Anything that is actually happening is happening now.

Once something has happened it belongs to the past and exists only as a record imprinted on the substance of nature. It is impossible to return to the actual past, but the records of past events can be viewed clairvoyantly by those with the necessary occult powers. It is equally impossible for us to visit the actual future or for beings from the future to visit us, since the future, by definition, has not yet happened. However, since the future unfolds out of present (and past) causes, it is foreshadowed in the present, and it is therefore possible to see clairvoyantly the future that is most probable at any given time.

An advocate of the time-travel theory is Illobrand von Ludwiger, who argues that UFOs 'are visitors from our own future carrying out the task of rejuvenating their genetic stock by interbreeding with humans'. One of the pieces of 'evidence' he presents in favour of time travel is that a corporal in Chile grew a 5-day beard during an absence of only 20 minutes. This is supposed to prove that he travelled into the future and back – assuming of course that beards continue to grow when moving backward in time! Clearly, such arguments border on the moronic.

Vallee says that,

'the UFO phenomenon is one of the ways through which an alien form of intelligence of incredible complexity is communicating with us symbolically', and that paranormal phenomena like UFOs are one of the manifestations of a 'spiritual control system for human consciousness'.

Remarks such as this make it sound as if UFO events are orchestrated by a single, overarching, 'alien' intelligence, albeit one closely connected with the earth. However, the variety of UFO manifestations suggests that such phenomena involve a wide range of different entities, from demonic and subhuman to spiritual and superhuman.

Some researchers have proposed that the alternate reality from which UFOs derive is the imaginal realm, a planetary thought-field created and sustained by the power of human imagination.

- Kenneth Ring hypothesizes that UFOs can be projected from this realm, and that UFO encounters partly take place in it.
- Likewise, Michael Grosso proposes that all paranormal appearances with a public or quasi-physical dimension – e.g. of UFOs, aliens, religious figures like the Virgin Mary, fairies, demons, or monstrous animals – might be thought-forms telepathically generated by the collective subconscious minds of the people of a community or culture.

Both researchers believe that there is also some sort of extramundane agency, 'an Oz of cosmic proportions', or 'planetary Overmind', at work, helping to orchestrate extraordinary experiences.

It certainly seems doubtful that ordinary humans alone have the power to call into being flying objects that can reflect radar, chase jet planes, and interfere with cars. As Richard Thompson says,

'If human imagination has so much power, then why don't typical sci-fi movie monsters materialize in American cities?'

The ways in which the UFO phenomenon manifests do seem to be linked to the world of human beliefs and imagination, but the phenomenon also seems to have a dynamic of its own. The 'imaginal realm' is therefore best conceived of as a collective mind containing but transcending individual minds, and as a transphysical world that interacts with the physical world – in other words, as the astral realm of occult tradition. In particular, UFO phenomena could involve temporary physical manifestations of shape-shifting, elemental energy-forms and thought-forms or other astral entities, which either materialize and dematerialize spontaneously or whose manifestations are partly directed by other intelligences.

The UFO phenomenon throws up major questions: What determines the place and time of UFO manifestations, the form they take, and who witnesses them? A variety of attempts have been made to explain the timing of UFO waves. They certainly cannot be blamed on media interest: studies show that an increase in UFO reports generates greater media coverage, rather than the other way round. Debunkers predicted that the release of the film *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* in 1977 would spawn a major flap – but it never happened. Attempts have been made to correlate UFO flaps with social unrest, political tensions, and military crises.

One researcher sees a certain correspondence between UFO flaps in the US and periods when national self-esteem is at a low ebb. However, no single-factor hypothesis is absolutely convincing; a whole constellation of personal, regional, national, and global factors could be involved. Only someone with a deep understanding of the astral world and its interaction with our physical world, and of the karmic background of witnesses could identify all the causes in any particular case.

4. Physical Parameters

UFOs come in an incredible variety of shapes, and there are very few instances where absolutely identical-looking UFOs have been independently sighted in different locations. UFOs in the shape of dumbbells, hats, and washtubs have been reported, as have machines flying through the air with moving wings. But many UFO enthusiasts prefer to ignore reports that do not conform to their

conception of what extraterrestrial spacecraft should look like!

Eight main types of UFO can be distinguished:

1. Lightforms, including balls, rays, columns, and cones of light, and light formations or arrays that don't seem to be attached to an object. The overwhelming majority of UFO sightings involve nothing more than bright lights, mostly seen at night.
2. Spherical UFOs, ranging in size from a basketball to a house.
3. Discoid or disc-shaped UFOs – the 'classic' flying saucer. These have always been one of the most frequently reported UFO shapes. They may be domed, finned, or otherwise outfitted.
4. Elliptical, oval, or egg-shaped UFOs. They often lack exterior features.
5. Cylindrical or cigar-shaped UFOs. Their ends may be tapered or conical, or sometimes flattened. Some produce a distinctive 'vapour trail'.
6. Rectangular UFOs, i.e. objects with squared corners. They can be as small as a 'flying carpet' or as large as an aircraft carrier. They are seen infrequently, and are largely a South American phenomenon.
7. Triangular UFOs were rare in the early days of the modern UFO era but now account for an inordinate number of reports. They include top-shaped, diamond-shaped, and cone-shaped objects, as well as flying wings or 'boomerangs'.
8. Shape-shifters are UFOs that alter form over time in ways that can't be attributed to the angle of perception. They cast doubt on the literal, physical nature of the phenomenon.

In terms of size, UFOs range from small balls of light a few inches in diameter to giant, flying wing- or triangle-shaped objects as large as football fields. The classic flying saucer is 35 to 50 feet (10 to 15 meters) across.

UFOs are sometimes seen entering or emerging from water. There are reports that Unidentified Submarine Objects (USOs) used to follow Soviet submarines, sometimes anticipating their manoeuvres, and were suspected of being American devices. On one occasion a Soviet icebreaker was working its way in the Arctic Ocean when a brilliant spherical craft suddenly broke through the ice and flew up vertically, showering the vessel with fragments of ice. It was seen by all the sailors on deck and the officers on the bridge.

It should be borne in mind that humans are notoriously bad at accurately recalling what they have seen. A TV audience was shown a faked picture of a fairly 'classic' flying saucer for 15 seconds, and then asked to draw what they had seen. The results were extraordinary: 50 totally different and almost entirely inaccurate images came back.

One image was a circle with 4 huge wings radiating out from it. Since UFOs are widely believed to be alien spaceships, a blurred dark area might easily be interpreted as a porthole, and dark shading underneath might be interpreted as landing gear. Large-scale meteors or fireballs are sometimes reported as having 'windows'.

UFOs are either 'solid' all the way through or contain a compartment of some sort. Most of the descriptions of UFO interiors come from abductees, who in most cases are probably not reporting an objective, physical experience. At any rate, a study of 150 abduction reports found tables mentioned in 39%, computer/TV screens in 13%, computers in 12%, chairs in 8%, counters or shelves in 7%, cabinets in 7%, and benches in 4%. The tidy UFO interiors described sound rather antiseptic and unlived in, though abductee Whitley Strieber recalled seeing dirty clothes piled up in one corner of the chamber in which he once found himself.

It is interesting to note how animals react to UFOs. Dogs usually dislike them intensely; they may

bark, howl, or froth, and some cower in terror when an object is about. Cats hiss and spit, sheep stampede, horses rear up, cows lie down, and birds simply stop singing. These reactions are sometimes elicited before humans are aware of anything unusual. In some cases animals may be agitated by high-pitched sounds or microwave radiation, or they may simply sense the presence of something unknown and frightening. Most reactions seem to be temporary but a few persist. Cattle may refuse for several days to be herded into paddocks over which UFOs have been seen to hover, and in one case a single sniff at a recent landing site sent a dog dashing away howling.

In another case, a man and his wife were awakened by their 3 large security dogs barking, growling, and behaving in a very agitated manner. The dogs were pulling at their chains towards a wooden area to the east. But when they were turned loose, they would not move, even though their owner commanded them to go. They would look toward the wooden area, growl, then back up. The man and his wife then saw a brilliant flash of light coming from the wooden area, and the next morning they found a 'landing site'.

According to the 'psychosocial hypothesis', UFOs are purely psychological phenomena moulded by sociocultural beliefs. This theory is clearly inadequate since UFOs often have physical effects and leave physical traces. Many UFOs that have been observed visually have also been observed on radar, though the majority do not show up on radar. Sometimes UFOs are observed on radar but are not sighted visually. It is well known that many atmospheric conditions can give rise to false radar echoes, but this is unlikely to account for all 'uncorrelated targets'. Radar records show that unknown objects often follow erratic paths, suddenly vanish from one spot and appear in another, and undergo abrupt and extreme altitude and velocity changes.

Over the decades, scores of photographs, videotapes, and film segments showing unknown objects in the sky have been studied by scientists and trained photo analysts.

Although there have been many hoaxes, there are also many photographs, films, and videotapes that appear to be authentic and are consistent with what the witnesses claim to have seen.

Right. A frame from the 8 mm movie taken by George Adamski in the presence of Madeleine Rodeffer and 3 other witnesses at Silver Spring, Maryland, in February 1965. Optical physicist William Sherwood suggested that the apparent distortion seen in this and other frames could be caused by a powerful gravitational field.

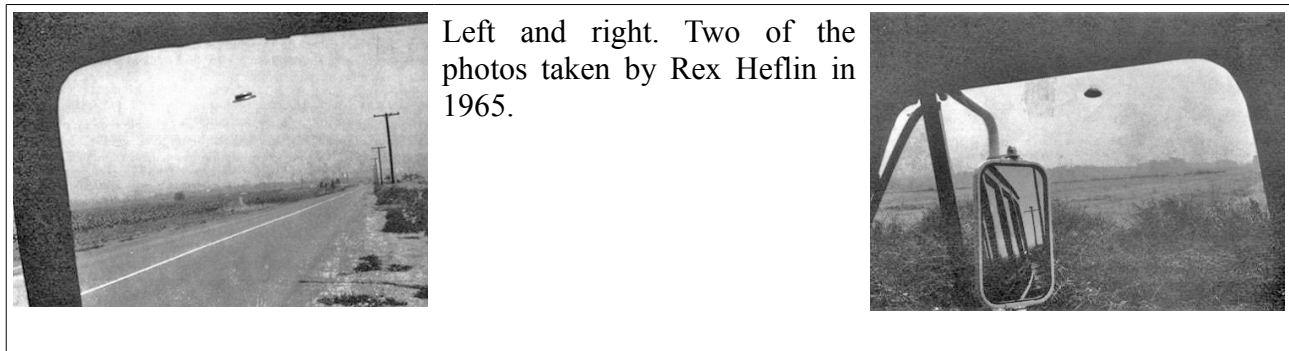


On 3 August 1965, highway engineer Rex Heflin took a series of 4 Polaroid photos of a silvery craft near Santa Ana, California. Over a period of about 2 minutes the craft moved east, 'wobbling' slightly, gained altitude slowly, then increased its velocity and altitude more rapidly, leaving behind a ring of smokelike vapour. Several scientists and other researchers launched an all-out effort to study the photos. In September 1965 two men in civilian clothes, claiming to be from the North American Air Defense, came to Heflin's home and 'borrowed' 3 of the original photos.

The photos were never returned and the 2 visitors were never traced. However, copies of the stolen

photos continued to be analyzed. They were regarded as most probably genuine though some doubts remained. Then one day in 1993 Heflin recieved a phone call from a woman who asked him if he had recently checked his mailbox and then rang off. Half an hour later she called again and asked the same question. After the first call Heflin found his mailbox to be empty, but after the second he found a plain, unmarked envelope containing the 3 lost photos.

The photos were then reanalyzed using state-of-the-art computer enchancement, and the analysis supported the view that they were genuine.



Left and right. Two of the photos taken by Rex Heflin in 1965.

The military undoubtedly have many reliable physical records of UFOs in their possession. In an incident at the White Sands Proving Ground, a V2 rocket was about to be fired when 2 objects, 2 to 3 feet in diameter, came down, circled around the V2 several times, and went back up, vanishing into the sky. The camera crew used up all their film on the UFOs, and the V2 flight was cancelled while they reloaded their cameras.

On 17 July 1957 an air force RB-47 was followed by a luminous, highly manoeuvrable object for about 1.5 hours, over a distance of well over 700 miles, as it flew from Mississippi to Oklahoma. The object was, at various times, seen visually by the cockpit crew as an intensely luminous light, followed by ground-radar, and detected on electronic counter-measures (ECM) equipment on the plane.

The case involved several instances of simultaneous appearances and disappearances on all 3 'channels'.



Left. Photograph of an unidentified, stationary, high-altitude bright light source, taken by a Canadian Air Force pilot in 1956 (courtesy of Bruce Maccabee). The disc-like object is over 100 meters in diameter, and its power output is estimated at over one billion watts.

UFOs often – but by no means always – cause car engines to stall, power blackouts, and other electromagnetic disturbances, such as spinning compasses. Curiously, not a single case of a vehicle stalling has ever resulted in a serious accident. Landings often leave ground traces, described as circular, oval, or irregular in shape. Vegetation in the traces may be burned, depressed, or

dehydrated, and there are often symmetrically arranged marks suggestive of landing gear imprints.

One of the best-documented incidents of the landing-trace variety took place on 8 January 1981 when a man working in his garden in Trans-en-Provence, France, reported that he had witnessed the landing of a craft in the form of 2 saucers upside down, one against the other. The object rested on the ground for a short period before flying away. It left behind traces, impressions, and other evidence of the presence of a large vehicle. An intensive investigation was mounted by France's official UFO-monitoring agency, GEPAN, which took soil, leaf, and plant samples and had them analyzed by government laboratories.

In 1983, in a 66-page scientific monograph on the case, GEPAN noted that the leaves had inexplicably lost 30 to 50% of their chlorophyll and had aged abruptly in ways that could not be duplicated in the laboratory. There was evidence of an 'occurrence of an important event which brought with it deformations of the terrain caused by mass, mechanics, a heating effect, and perhaps certain transformations and deposits of trace minerals [phosphate and zinc]'. It concluded that these effects could be best explained by a powerful emission of possibly pulsed microwaves.

There are rare reports of UFOs ejecting molten metal and of physical specimens being found at a location after a sighting. Analysis of such samples has identified various terrestrial elements such as aluminium, tin, magnesium, and silicon, as well as oil, but no evidence of anything of definitely unearthly origin has turned up.

There are many well-attested cases of a shining filament-type material called 'angel hair' falling out of the sky in association with UFO sightings. There are photos of people handling it, and a chemist who examined a specimen under the microscope described it as 'radioactive, heavily damaged cotton'. It usually 'evaporates' fairly quickly.

There are also many accounts associating sightings of aerial objects with falls of translucent or transparent gelatinous material, which quickly evaporates. This material, sometimes called 'poudre' or 'star jelly', has been reported for centuries. One suggestion is that it could be excrement or other residue from unusual atmospheric lifeforms.

There are numerous reports of UFO witnesses suffering adverse physical effects, such as dizziness, headaches, paralysis, numbness, fatigue, nausea, diarrhea, weight loss, irritation of the eyes, itchy rashes, burns, and other radiation-like effects. For instance, one morning in 1973 an American truck driver noticed that his tractor-trailer rig was being overtaken by a bright, turnip-shaped object roughly as wide as a 2-lane highway. When he leaned out of the window, he was hit in the face by a 'red flash of fire' that blinded him and partially melted his glasses frames. His glasses were bubbled-out as if the wire inside the frames had been heated by microwave radiation, causing the plastic around it to melt. He was hospitalized with severe reduction of vision in both eyes, but gradually recovered his sight over a period of 3 weeks.

In Brazil there have been many reports of rectangular UFOs (nicknamed 'chupas') firing beams at people at night, often causing serious and sometimes fatal injuries. In many of these incidents the victims were hunters who in turn became hunted. In one well-documented case a man was stunned and blinded after being hit by a beam of light; his flesh began to detach itself from his bones, and he died 6 hours later.

Many of the injuries reported in these cases are consistent with the effects of high-power pulsed microwaves, though this does not explain the small puncture marks sometimes found in the skin. Military encounters with UFOs have also led to fatalities. For instance, on 23 November 1953, a military jet was scrambled from Kinross Air Force Base in Michigan to chase an unidentified

object. The aircraft was tracked on radar as it merged with the target over Lake Superior. Both objects then disappeared from the screen. Despite an intensive search, no wreckage or bodies were ever found.

Given all the various physical effects reported, and also UFOs' frequent interest in aircraft and in military and nuclear installations, it is not surprising that some military personnel should regard UFOs as physical spacecraft that pose a potential security threat. Nor is it surprising that they should want to know more about their propulsion system, which appears to be far beyond the capabilities of our own current technology.

The objects Kenneth Arnold sighted in 1947 were moving at about 2100 kilometers per hour, but since then speeds up to 35,000 kilometers per hour or more have been reported. Most UFOs have no visible means of propulsion, though sometimes they leave a luminous trail. Most UFOs are silent in operation, whether seen at a distance or close up. In cases where an audible sound is heard, it is usually described as a steady, low-pitched hum or a repetitive, high-pitched beep. But hissing, whining, whistling, roaring, and explosive noises have also been reported.

UFOs are often observed to follow an abrupt, zigzag path as opposed to a straight line or gently curving trajectory. A hovering UFO that descends towards the ground frequently makes a 'falling-leaf' or pendulum motion, involving a gentle rocking from side to side. As well as being able to hover silently, UFOs have been seen to undergo incredible accelerations and decelerations and to make 90-degree turns that would tear conventional aircraft – and their pilots – apart.

During military encounters with UFOs in Belgium in 1990, a UFO was observed to achieve a fantastic acceleration of 40 g's. This would cause immediate death to human pilots, who can take no more than about 8 g's. If this had been a conventional aircraft, not only would there have been a supersonic boom but, given the low altitude and speed, many windows would have been shattered. There are in fact no reports of sonic booms being produced by UFOs in supersonic flight (more than 1225 km per hour).

If UFOs were ordinary physical craft, to prevent manoeuvres such as those described above from producing massive g forces either the craft would have to be made massless, or some form of 'anti-gravity' propulsion would have to be used, so that any acceleration or deceleration is imparted to every molecule of the structure simultaneously.

This conclusion is supported by Paul Hill, a former NASA aeronautical engineer. He noted that UFOs tend to sit level to hover, tilt forward to advance, tilt backwards to stop, and bank to turn. Such motion is inconsistent with normal aerodynamic requirements, but consistent with some form of repulsive force-field propulsion, which he thinks probably involves a gravity-cancelling field. This could explain why UFOs cause vehicles to stall, break tree branches, dislodge roof tiles, deflect objects, and disturb water.

It would allow the occupants of a craft to survive extreme supersonic flight without sonic booms, and would eliminate any significant aerodynamic heating. In addition, a plasma sheath or ionized and excited air molecules would surround the craft, and affect its colours during various phases of its flight – red and orange during hovering and slow motions, blue and white at or just before high speeds – as well as how sharp or blurry its edges appear at night.

As far as their flight performance is concerned, some UFOs could therefore be physical craft making use of anti-gravity technology. It should be noted, however, that UFOs sometimes have weird, nonaerodynamic designs, apparently rivetted panels, and some have been seen to emit fire, smoke, and steam! UFOs need not be ordinary physical craft at all, and rather than being propelled

by an advanced physical technology making use of conventional physical forces, they may be propelled by parapsychical, paranormal forces.

Some UFOs could be living creatures (or 'critters') rather than spacecraft and possess a natural power of flight using their own life energy (see next section). Trevor Constable argues that both creature and craft could emerge into our physical reality from the etheric realms and be powered by etheric energy. Wilhelm Reich (who died in 1957) called this energy 'orgone', and demonstrated its existence experimentally.

Constable argues that the known properties of orgone energy can account for many of the phenomena associated with UFOs.

Right. A UFO photographed by a US Marine Air Group pilot over the Northeast China Sea during the Korean war. The sharply delineated straight line in the middle and the black lower half suggest photographic trickery, but similar bizarre effects have been noted in other cases.

According to Trevor Constable, the blackness on the underside and left-hand extremity of the disc is caused by high concentrations of contractive, cold orgone energy, which is known to desensitize or nullify film emulsions. He argues that orgone energy spins around the circumference of the craft, and that the camera has 'stopped' the rotating field on the left side of the disc, accounting for the otherwise anomalous 'shadow' on the upper side of the vehicle.

Constable remarks: 'What earthmen don't know about light, color, energy, substance and tangibility would fill a bloody great hole in the ground'.



When electromagnetic signals propagate through the ether they are weakened in proportion to the square of the distance they have travelled. If a UFO is surrounded by a high concentration of orgone, this could explain power failures and electromagnetic interference. Plasmas created by the whirling fields around the craft could account for reports of UFOs causing burning and scorching.

Experiments indicate that human contact with a high concentration of orgone would withdraw their own bioenergy, resulting in numbness or even unconsciousness. Orgone energy could also explain temporary blindness in witnesses, and burning, tanning, and reddening of the skin.

Spinning is probably the most common single motion attributed to UFOs; when in flight they either spin, or give the illusion of spinning as a result of their moving lights. Constable argues that both spinning and 'falling-leaf' motions can be explained by the spinning wave motion (also known as the *kreiselwelle* or KRW) or orgone energy. The sometimes jerky and erratic motion of UFOs resembles the flight of humming birds, which, like all organisms, make use of their own orgone life-energy.

The bobbing, skipping and swinging of various types of UFO emerges from the fundamental KRW pattern of the energy used in propulsion, or, in the case of the critters, in their animation and natural

life pulsation. Skipping discs such as those first witnessed by Kenneth Arnold, may well propel themselves using the peak energies of the huge KRW waveforms that are naturally present in our atmosphere.

Are UFOs physically real? In theory, they could be any of the following:

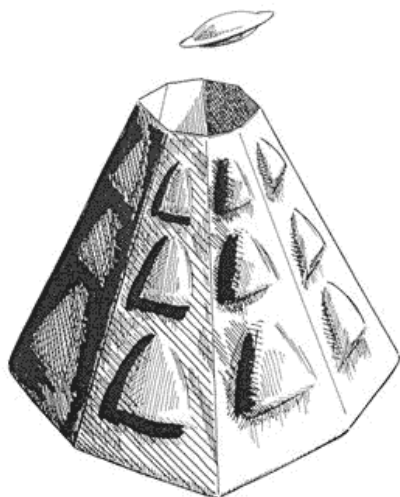
1. genuine physical objects
2. temporarily materialized ethereal objects
3. ethereal objects perceived clairvoyantly
4. projected external images or holograms
5. illusions existing only in witnesses' minds, either
 - (a) self-generated or
 - (b) induced by other entities

Whether UFOs show up on radar or not does not necessarily prove whether they are physically solid, since physical objects can be made invisible to radar. Conversely, not everything that shows up on radar is physically visible. Films of UFOs do not prove that they are three-dimensional objects possessing physical density unless they are also seen to interact physically with their environment, such as by leaving material landing traces.

The following sighting took place at Pelotas, Brazil, on 5 October 1996. Businessman Haraldo Westendorf, a trained stunt flyer who did not believe in UFOs, spotted an enormous cone-shaped object, about 225 feet high and 325 feet in diameter at its widest point. Over a period of 15 minutes he circled the huge, brown, spinning object 3 times, once bringing his tiny plane within 130 feet of it. He then noticed a hole where the rounded top on the object had been just moments before. Out of it rose a classic, saucer-shaped object, about 30 feet (9 meters) in diameter, which sped off at about Mach 10 (i.e. 10 times the speed of sound).

Westendorf was going to fly over the top of the 'mother ship' but changed his mind when it began to rotate more rapidly and fire red light beams from its top. The object then shot up at tremendous speed, and Westendorf at first thought the resulting shock wave might knock him out of the sky. However, he never felt any turbulence – which suggests it was not an ordinary physical object.

The entire incident was witnessed by 3 ground-based air traffic controllers and numerous other people on the beach at Pelotas, but the government's air defense system radar centre at Curitiba never picked up the mysterious object on their radar screens.



Left. UFOs sighted at Pelotas, Brazil, October 1996 (courtesy of Harry Trumbore).

The following close encounter appears to involve an object that was physically tangible (at least temporarily) and not just physically visible. On 14 June 1968 Isidro Puentes Ventura, a reservist in the Cuban army, was standing guard by himself when he saw a white light behind some trees and went to investigate. He found himself 150 feet from an object resting on the ground, and observed it for 10 minutes. It was round, with a dome and a series of 'antennas' on top. Despite its strange shape and unusual brightness, he thought it might be an American helicopter and started firing at it. He had fired about 40 rounds when the craft became orange and emitted a strong whistling sound.

Then he lost consciousness. 5 minutes past midnight several machine-gun rounds were heard coming from Puente's location. He was found unconscious at dawn, and taken to hospital; he was unable to speak for 6 days and remained in shock for a further 7. Investigators found 48 spent machine-gun casings and 14 bullets flattened by impact against some extremely hard metallic object.

A depression was visible in the soil, with a central hole 3 feet in diameter and 3 smaller indentations around it, indicating the presence of a very heavy object. Cuban radar had detected an unidentified object that vanished amidst tremendous electronic noise. Within a 15 feet radius the soil at the site was calcined and covered with ashlike gray dust; analysis confirmed that a high degree of heat had been applied.

The following case involves a shape-shifting UFO. During an Aeroflot flight in September 1984, the crew and passengers saw an enormous yellow 'star' which projected a beam of light towards the ground, followed by 2 less vivid beams. The big beam then swung round and projected straight into the aircraft cabin as the object raced towards the plane, changing into a 'green cloud'. Minsk ground control was contacted but the air traffic controller could see nothing on the radar screen. The object cruised along beside the plane. Multiple lights of different colours and fiery zigzags crisscrossed the 'vapour'. By this time the ground controller could see the light show.

The object then began changing shape as if to mimic the plane. It developed an appendage and then became a 'wingless cloud-aircraft with a pointed tail'. Another airliner also saw the weird green cloud, as did controllers at Riga and Vilnius. The 'cloud' continued to escort the plane for over an hour until it began to descend to land at Tallinn. Strangely, the Tallinn approach radar had picked up two 'blips' trailing behind the aircraft, and while these targets remained 'solid', the radar reflection of the aircraft kept fading in and out! The other airliner had approached the UFO, which shot a beam of light that struck the 2 pilots. Several days later, one of them was taken to hospital, where he later died of a disease resembling myeloma, i.e. malignancy of the bone marrow. A similar disease made the other pilot an invalid for life.

If UFOs were ordinary, tangible objects they should be seen pursuing straight flight paths over considerable distances, but there are few cases where this has occurred. Instead, they often seem to appear abruptly, maneuver about in a localized area, then abruptly disappear from sight or radar screens. As the above case illustrates, they have also been observed to change shape.

Their sudden appearance and disappearance are sometimes accompanied by a flash of light or an explosion. In some cases UFOs (and UFO entities) vanish without a sound, suggesting that they are not ordinary physical phenomena, since otherwise their disappearance would create a partial vacuum and make a noise. In one case, analysis of a videotape of a craft's disappearance showed that it actually accelerated almost instantly to several times the speed of sound, causing it to become invisible to the eye. However, genuine materialization and dematerialization sometimes seem to be involved.

In one incident, a man saw a hovering disc suddenly grow smaller and vanish, accompanied by a

blast of wind which knocked him to the ground. In another, the head of a team of construction workers encountered a strange-looking man standing in front of a large shining dome floating about 3 feet above the ground. Suddenly the strange man vanished. Then a loud whistling sound was heard and the saucer rose by successive jerks, before being erased in a sort of blue haze. The story was corroborated by several of the construction workers.

In October 1969, a French couple saw an oval-shaped object on the ground, the size of a VW Beetle, which lifted up, paused briefly, then disappeared at an amazing speed, flying off into the trees, and passing through them as if they did not exist.

5. Lightforms and bioforms

The majority of UFOs are nothing more than bright lights, generally seen at high altitude. Scientists tend to ignore high-altitude nocturnal lights because of their close association with ufology. Low-level light phenomena have received more attention, though many are just as anomalous and remain poorly understood.

A low-level luminous phenomenon sometimes thought to be related to UFOs is ball lightning. However, ball lightning diameters are generally 10 to 40 centimeters, while the diameters of flying discs can be hundreds of times larger. Ball lightning is generally thought to consist of glowing spheres of plasma created by electromagnetic forces, but no one can explain how such spheres form and preserve their shape, or how so much energy can be concentrated in such a small volume.

Ball lightning can pass through glass windows without breaking them, and can even appear within a metal-screened environment, such as an aircraft, which a straightforward electrical effect would not be expected to do. Furthermore, it can hover, float languidly, fall to the ground, remain stationary, or move as if purposefully; sometimes it seems to inquisitively explore a room as if directed by intelligence. Related phenomena include luminous aerial bubbles – 'large assemblages of colored spheres or bubbles drifting randomly, quickly, almost playfully'. After sunset they might become nocturnal lights.

In a case from 1954, a ball of light about the size of a basketball fell from the clouds, about 20 feet in front of a man's car. It bounced 3 times and then detonated the next time it touched the earth. Interestingly, the engine stalled and the car coasted to a stop – an often-reported phenomenon in UFO encounters. More glowing balls continued to fall and bounce, as if in slow motion.

The usually flame-like forms known by names such as 'will-o'-the-wisp', 'jack-o'-lantern', 'ignis fatuus', and 'corpse candles' make up another class of earthlights. In folklore they were interpreted as wandering sprites liable to lead travellers to their doom, or as harbringers of death, and were widely believed to hover over fresh graves.

The standard explanation attributes them to spontaneously ignited gases (largely methane) escaping from swampy ground, but this theory will not work in many instances as the flames are often described as cold. Sightings of will-o'-the-wisps decreased towards the end of the 19th century, while sightings of UFOs have since increased. It seems that 'UFO' has become the new catch-all term for unusual luminous phenomena.

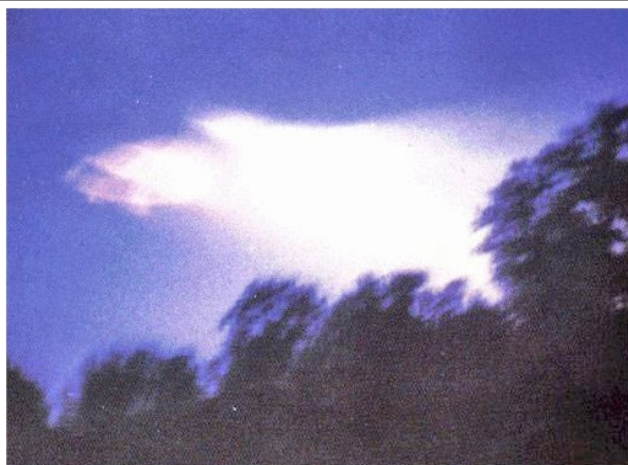
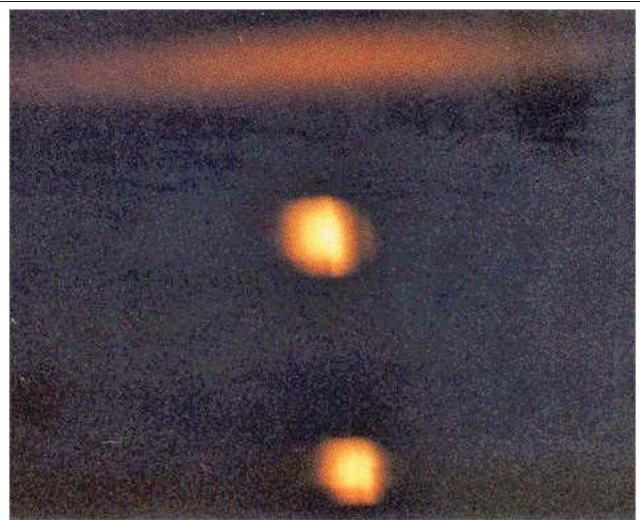
Other unexplained light phenomena are earthquake lights and volcano lights, often reported before,

during, or after a quake or eruption. Earthquake lights come in a wide range of forms, such as streamers and aurorae-like displays across the sky, balls of light, glows in the atmosphere, sparkles of light on hillsides, and 'slow' lightning. Sometimes lights are seen in or above the sea, some of which may be traceable to submarine quakes. Other extraordinary light phenomena reported by seafarers, especially in the Indian Ocean, include great wheels and bands of light fanning soundlessly across the ocean, but scientists prefer to ignore these mysterious manifestations.

Earthlight sightings are particularly common near active geological faults. According to the tectonic strain theory developed by researchers such as Paul Devereux and Michael Persinger, these lightforms are mainly generated by stresses and strains in the earth's crust, though the exact mechanism is unknown.

Similar phenomena have been recreated experimentally on a laboratory scale, and the evidence contradicts the popular theory that they are plasmas.

Right. This photograph of 2 balls of light flying over Carleton Moor near Skipton, England, was taken by police sergeant Tony Dodd at 3:15 AM on 14 March 1983. Note how the upper light illuminates the underside of the low cloud. Many mystery lights have been reported in the area.



Left. This remarkable photograph was taken by David Kubrin in 1973. After visiting the Pinnacles National Monument in California, he and his wife suddenly saw a light streak by just above the treetops, producing shockwaves in the air. Then it stopped without deceleration, as if weightless. The light was basically ovoid in form, and as it stopped it seemed to go into a spin, causing its light to dissipate. It lost its shape and merged somewhat with the surrounding air. The photograph was taken as the spinning began. It shows a golden light core partially surrounded by a flare of light, against a darkening blue sky. The Pinnacles are spectacular spire-like columns and jagged peaks. Beneath them is an intricate cave system, and the site is bounded on the east by the San Andreas Fault.

Earthlights vary enormously in size and colour and can change shape. They range in size from ping-pong balls of luminosity to grand lightforms, though basketball size is common. They are usually round or spherical, but tubes, cigars, rectangles, diamonds, tadpole-shapes, and irregular forms have

frequently been described. At close range, a teeming inner activity is sometimes reported within them.

Earthlights can make sounds of various kinds, notably hissing and buzzing noises. Multiple earthlights seen flying together can divide and merge, and display seemingly coordinated movements. They are frequently seen emerging from or disappearing into the ground. They often haunt bodies of water such as lakes and reservoirs, and are occasionally seen glowing beneath the surface of the water. When free-floating, they commonly prefer the vicinity of mountain peaks and ridges, isolated rooftops, towers and antennae, and other sharp or isolated features that tend to be charge collectors.

This might indicate that they have some kind of electromagnetic basis. However, the light produced frequently seems to be of an unusual nature, very bright, but defined and without rays.

Devereux believes that earthlights are on the very edge of physical manifestation, which may explain why some lights show up on radar while others do not. The geographical zones in which they appear must provide a source of energy, probably electromagnetic or gravitational, allowing them to intrude into and move around in our material world. The exact mechanisms that generate them are unknown, but Devereux thinks they represent 'an energy manifestation that is either an unfamiliar form of electromagnetism, or else is of a completely unknown order that interacts, resonates, in some way with parts of the electromagnetic spectrum'.

He draws a parallel with the Chinese concept of chi, or the kurunba of the Australian aborigines: 'a primary sea of force that underpins the manifestation of energy effects and matter in the material world'. He also points out that earthlights frequently seem to display intelligence and to respond to the movements and thoughts of observers.

Devereux believes that most UFOs are in fact earthlights. Over 40% of UFO sightings are said to occur on or close to geological faults, which are the scenes of electrical, magnetic, or gravimetric variations. It is noteworthy that poltergeist and other paranormal activity often occurs in the immediate neighbourhood of earthlight outbreaks, and during the same period, and that both UFO and poltergeist activity seem to increase at times of significantly high global geomagnetic activity.

However, the earthlight theory cannot account for all UFO sightings. First, UFOs are also seen in seismically inactive areas. Second, although earthlights seen in daylight can look shiny and metallic and are likely to have a spherical, ovoid, or discoid form, the largest earthlights are usually only several meters across, whereas some UFOs are many times larger. Third, although energetic lightballs have been known to singe foliage and leave burns and grooves on the ground, earthlights cannot account for close-range sightings of large, structured, heavy craft that leave corresponding landing traces.

To account for close encounters with 'aliens', including abductions, the tectonic strain theory has been extended with the notion of electromagnetically induced hallucinations. Our perceptions of the world around us are mediated by the patterns of electromagnetic activity they generate in our brains. Any stimulus that can induce similar patterns of activity in the brain can generate experiences that are just as real and compelling as actual events.

Michael Persinger has shown that stimulating the temporal lobes of the brain with electrodes can induce a variety of deeply disturbing mental experiences, including nearly every basic element of mystical, religious, and visitor experiences, such as encounters with demons, angels, and fairies.

Persinger and Devereux argue that the energy fluctuations generated by fault lines can not only give

rise to earthlights but can also – especially at close range – interact with the human nervous system, specifically with the brain's temporal lobe, generating hallucinations of alien encounters. This typically happens when the witness is in an altered state of consciousness (usually during early morning hours) or during a protracted period of driving, when right-hemispheric brain activity and interruptions of consciousness are encouraged. The details of the experience depend on witnesses' beliefs and expectations, on the sensitivity of their temporal lobes and limbic regions, and on the complexity of the electromagnetic field applied through the brain.

There are numerous accounts of people coming very close to earthlights without receiving any physical injury or suffering hallucinatory effects, but Devereux suggests that these differences may depend on the frequency at which the energy from a light emanates.

The major weakness in this theory is that although electromagnetic fields may be able to induce hallucinations in the laboratory, no ordinary, random field outside the laboratory could produce an ordered, coherent train of thought during a close encounter lasting for about an hour, including many matching details in the recollections of different witnesses. It is quite possible that some close encounters, or at least certain elements of them, are visionary or hallucinatory experiences. But the mechanisms inducing them are unlikely to be ordinary physical forces.

Kenneth Ring argues that while extraordinary encounters may be correlated with neurological factors, such as temporal-lobe lability, they are not reducible to them.

Just as a television set is not in itself the source of the images we see on its screen, the brain may not generate our experiences either. Instead, it may serve to transmit them. Taking that stand, it may be necessary that a certain neurological state occur before certain images and information can be received, but that state then would be more like a window (even if it distorts the input somewhat) than a signal station in its own right.

Another theory, which overlaps with the earthlight theory to some extent, is that UFOs are aerial bioforms or sky creatures. By using an ordinary camera loaded with infrared film, Trevor Constable, a well-known aviation historian, has photographed plasmatic lifeforms in the atmosphere which inhabit the infrared part of the spectrum and are normally imperceptible. Their existence has been independently verified by researchers in Europe and the United States. Most are spherical, discoidal, or cigar-shaped, other look like fish or serpents, and many resemble giant pulsating unicellular organisms or amoebas. Constable believes that only some UFOs are living creatures (or 'critters') and that others are intelligently designed and controlled craft originating in the etheric realms.

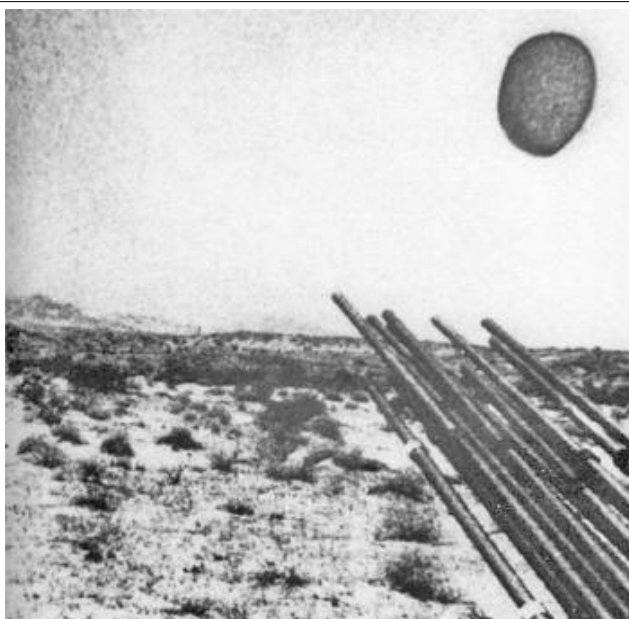
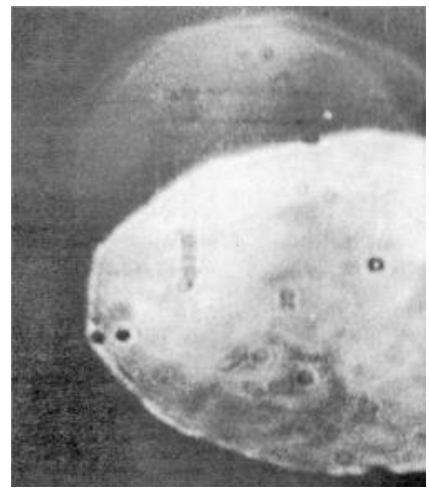
He argues that under certain conditions some aerial bioforms can alter their density and become physically visible and tangible. Their essentially ethereal, 'plastic' nature enables them to change shape, split into two, and merge. They appear to travel in pulsatory fashion, swelling and shrinking cyclically as they move through the air. They sometimes travel through the atmosphere in luminous shoals, rather like fish. Their behaviour suggests that they possess a low degree of intelligence. They have been seen playing around thunderheads and around aircraft wings.

They have paced airliners and jet fighters like dolphins pacing a ship. They have been seen chasing each other playfully around the sky, and tend to take evasive action if humans approach too close.

The creatures that Constable has photographed either inhabit the etheric borderland between the physical and astral realms or originate in the astral realms themselves, and are shape-shifting elemental lifeforms.



Left and right. These 2 photos show the same giant amoeba-like entity, complete with nuclei, nucleoli, and vacuoles. It was invisible to the naked eye and was photographed with infrared film on 25 August 1957 in the Californian Mojave desert. The sky background is black, because the filter used over the camera lens absorbs the blue sky radiation.



Left. This invisible critter was photographed at Thousand Palms, California, in May 1975 by Constable's daughter, Diana, then aged 11. She was extremely sensitive at this age and had been trained to take photos of objects perceived etherically. The camera was equipped with an 18A filter and high-speed infrared film. A 'cloudbuster', invented by Willhelm Reich for weather-engineering purposes, can be seen in the lower right.

Right. These invisible plasmoids are among many that were photographed at night near Genoa, Italy, in January 1981. Infrared and magnetic detectors and other instruments suddenly went wild and the researchers operated their cameras immediately, even though nothing was visible to the naked eye. The many photos taken show these strange blue and white etheric forms falling from the zenith, and rolling down the hillside, skimming along the grass and among the cars, equipment, and researchers.



Radar provides another means of detecting invisible UFOs, including critters. Radar emits bursts of

microwaves which are reflected back by whatever gets in their way. Microwaves lie between radio waves and infrared radiation, and infrared lies just beyond the red part of the visible spectrum. Radar was perfected during the Second World War and was used to detect enemy aircraft and ships before they became visible to the naked eye. But sometimes objects were detected by radar which remained invisible even when they were so close that they should have been directly perceptible.

The following incident took place during the war, and is known as the Nansei-shoto case. Two US aircraft carriers were patrolling the area south of Okinawa in the North Pacific when their radars showed a very large blip approaching from the northeast, which was assumed to represent an estimated 200 to 300 enemy aircraft. At a range of 100 miles their speed was determined to be nearly 700 miles an hour – faster than any known aircraft in the world at that time. All the American aircraft available were scrambled and directed towards the approaching force.

Despite excellent visibility, the fighter pilots saw nothing, even when radar showed them to be directly above the attacking force. The 'enemy' kept on coming towards the task force, which was now preparing itself for the impending attack. The mysterious formation flew over the fleet, but the crew never saw a thing – just an empty blue sky.

There have been many similar incidents since then. These invisible objects are officially known as 'radar propagation anomalies', 'spurious echoes', 'radar ghosts', or 'angels'. Constable says that various way-out notions such as flocks of birds, heated pockets of gas, and clouds of insects are used to explain them away. He believes that many are unknown living creatures.

Radar can have curious effects on some UFOs. For instance, 2 naval officers reported that they had watched a couple of UFOs retreat hastily when they blundered into a strong radar field. The UFOs bounced back out of the radar beam like rubber balls striking a brick wall. This sounds like the response of something living to an unpleasant stimulus.

A similar incident at a New Jersey cape occurred in 1950. When UFOs were seen there repeatedly, the government was notified, and 3 radar towers mounted on trucks were brought. An officer explained that radar made the saucers 'stagger' and they hoped to bring one down if they could get enough beams on the disc at close range. The radar did cause the discs to stagger later that day but failed to bring them down. They sped away and the radar trucks were withdrawn a few days later. Periodic returns to certain areas, such as water sources, is of course a basic behavioral pattern of animals.

Radars cannot cause any known aircraft to 'stagger', but the powerful beams of pulsed electronic energy they emit can stimulate and even burn living tissue.

The following accounts show that a wide variety of living lightforms and sky creatures may exist.

In September 1891 a bizarre atmospheric lifeform was seen over Crawfordsville, Indiana. It was headless and oblong, 20 feet long and 8 feet wide, and propelled itself with several pairs of fins. 2 men, together with a Methodist pastor and his wife, observed it circle a house, disappear to the east for a short time and then return. The creature was back the following evening, and this time hundreds of residents saw its violently flapping fins and flaming red 'eye'. The creature 'squirmed as if in agony' and made a 'wheezing plaintive sound' as it hovered at 300 feet. At one point it swooped over a band of onlookers, who swore they felt its 'hot breath'.

In 1925 Don Wood and another American landed in a two-seated plane on Flat Mesa, near Battle Mountain in the Nevada desert. While walking about the top they noticed something coming in to land. It was round and flat like a saucer, and about 8 feet across, with a reddish underside. It skidded

to a stop about 30 feet away.

They walked up to it and found that it was an animal like nothing they had seen before. It had a mica-like body, but no visible eyes or legs. It was hurt, and as it breathed the top would rise and fall making a half-foot hole around it like a clam opening and closing. A hunk had been chewed out of one side of the rim, from which a metal-looking froth issued. After a 20-minute rest, it started pulsating again, and grew very bright except where it was hurt. It tried to rise up, but sank back again.

Suddenly the men saw a much larger animal, 30 feet across, approaching. It settled on the smaller one with 4 sucker-like tongues. Then it grew too dazzling to look at, and both rose straight up and shot out of sight in a second, at an estimated speed of 1000 miles an hour. They left behind an awful stench. The frothy stuff the little creature had 'bled' looked like fine aluminum wire, and there was more frothy, wiry stuff in a 30-foot circle where the big creature had been. This material finally melted in the sun. Don Wood did not publicize this incident until 1959 as he doubted whether anyone would believe him. He pointed out that the larger animal would appear as a 30-foot light if seen at night.

In August 1927 artist, philosopher, and explorer Nicholas Roerich and other members of his expedition saw a huge, shiny, oval-shaped object, one side of it glistening in the sun, high over the Altai-Himalaya. They watched through field glasses as it flew south at a great speed and then changed direction, before disappearing in the intense blue sky. A Buddhist lama said that the object was a sign of the protecting force of Shambhala, a legendary spiritual kingdom referred to in eastern traditions.

During the 1933 assault on Mount Everest, climber Frank Smythe saw 2 curious-looking objects floating in the sky, resembling kite balloons in shape, but one possessed what appeared to be squat, underdeveloped wings, and the other a protuberance suggestive of a beak. He saw at an altitude of 27,600 feet and the object were hovering about 400 feet lower.

They were very dark, and seemed to pulsate slowly. Other Himalayan expeditions in the 1920s and 30s reported seeing 'giant silver discs' and 'a flying teakettle'. Experts' dismissed these stories as hallucinations created by the high altitude. Local people, on the other hand, said that such aerial objects had always flown regular routes over the mountains, and they regarded them as religious manifestations.

The area around Darjeeling, in the Himalayan foothills in the extreme northeast of India, appears to be an earthlights lair. One evening near the beginning of the 20th century, some foreign visitors were walking round a flower garden when they saw a light like that of a lantern being carried down the path. It then flew across to another part of the hill, taking 2 to 3 minutes to cover a distance which would take an ordinary human at least half an hour.

They were told that it was one of the 'chota-admis' (little men), who lived underground and only came out at night, when they would walk or fly about with lanterns. They would never let anyone get near them and if anyone came upon them unexpectedly they would disappear, and the person who saw them might become ill or even die. On several subsequent occasions the witnesses saw identical lights flying across the hills.

Some years later the Tibetan Buddhist scholar Lama Anagarika Govinda saw similar lightforms gliding through the hills while staying at Gangtok, the capital of Sikkim, some 50 kilometers from Darjeeling. His host, the Maharaja, told him that the lights were not of human origin. They could float through the air at speeds no human could attain, and the people of his country considered them

to be a kind of spirit.

The 5-peaked Wu Tai Shan in northern China is a holy mountain to the Tibetans, Mongolians, and Chinese alike. The peaks of Wu Tai and all the surrounding temples are sacred to Manjushri, the bodhisattva of wisdom and virtue. On the southernmost peak, a tower was built specifically to observe the 'bodhisattva lights', which always materialized between midnight and 2 AM. In 1937 a party of European visitors was allowed to view them. They saw innumerable fluffy balls of orange-coloured fire moving serenely and majestically through space, 'truly a fitting manifestation of divinity'.

'Spooklights' are frequently seen around Marfa in Texas. In March 1973, 2 geologists saw 2 lights moving rapidly towards the northeast, almost at right angles to the road they were on. The first light slowed down near the road, crossed it less than 1000 feet in front of the car, only 3 or 4 feet off the ground, and continued to the east where it seemed to merge with a third light.

The second light followed approximately the same path as the first but more slowly. The men tried to sneak up on it in the car with the lights out, but it veered away. It hovered in the middle of the road, and the men had the impression that it knew exactly where they were and was daring them to chase it. The intensity of the light decreased as it slowed down and hovered in one spot. It was about half the size of a basketball and the colour of an incandescent light bulb. After about 30 seconds it moved off to the east to join the other lights, then they all vanished.

In northeastern Oklahoma there are frequent sightings of luminous phenomena known as the Tri-State or Hornet spooklight. Some of these lights have been shown to be refracted car headlights, but many remain unexplained. On one occasion 10 to 15 people were observing the Tri-State light when it suddenly appeared about 30 feet away in the middle of the road. It was about the size of a basketball, orange-yellow in colour, throbbing and slowly rolling along the ground. The awestruck onlookers remained extremely quiet, not wanting to frighten it. Suddenly some cars behind them began to crunch the gravel in the road, trying to get a better view. The light reacted by rising up to about 10 feet above the ground, split into 2 sections, and shot into the woods in both directions at once.

On 29 July 1947, 5 weeks after his famous sighting that ushered in the modern UFO epoch, Kenneth Arnold had a second UFO sighting. He was descending into La Grande, Oregon, to refuel his plane, when he was confronted by 'a flock of what looked like ducks', except that they were brassy-coloured and 3 to 5 feet across. There were several dozen of them, heading straight for him, but eventually they swerved away. When he dived into the cluster, they soared away leaving him standing.

In 1952 Arnold saw the UFOs again and took a movie of them. Two flew underneath him at Mount Lassen; one appeared solid but the pine trees could be seen through the other. He came to the conclusion that many flying saucers were living creatures rather than nuts-and-bolts spaceships. The US Air Force was aware that some of the luminous UFOs that buzzed its aircraft at high altitudes were observed to pulsate, and in April 1949 it issued a public announcement mentioning the hypothesis that some of these objects could be strange animals.

One summer morning in 1975 a New York science teacher was about to get into his car when he saw a dark cloud, the size of a basketball, hovering above his house. The cloud floated back and forth, changing in shape from a small globular mass to a larger ovoid and finally assuming a dark, multicurved, vaporous form, about 6 feet high and 1.5 feet wide. The man continued to watch in disbelief as events took an even stranger turn. The cloud seemed to inhale, pursed its 'lips', and directed a stream of water towards him and the car, soaking both. After a minute the spray stopped,

and the cloud vanished instantly. A pH test later confirmed that the precipitation was simply water. This event sounds like the prank of a mischievous elemental.

In the spring of 1951 US soldiers were mounting an attack on a Korean village when a glowing, disc-shaped UFO approached them. A private fired at it with armour-piercing bullets and heard the sound of metal hitting metal. The object 'went wild' and began to move erratically and flash its light off and on. The men then heard a sound like the revving of a generator, and were swept by some form of a ray, producing a burning, tingling sensation. 3 days later they had to be evacuated by ambulance as they were too weak to walk.

Bullets hitting UFOs, and also humanoid beings, are often reported to sound as if they are hitting metal – but this could mean that physicalized etheric matter can assume properties like those of metal rather than flesh. The 'mica-like' body and 'wiry froth' associated with the creatures seen by Don Wood on Flat Mesa seem to support this idea.

In mid-1964 a 'metallic' lifeform began appearing in Rio Vista, California. Reports described it as cigar-shaped, about 5 feet in diameter and 12 to 15 feet long. It glowed a soft red and moved silently. On 22 September 1965, 300 to 400 persons stood in the dark on a hilltop around a water tower where the object was generally observed. It appeared and was seen hovering or moving slowly a couple of hundred feet above the treetops or the top of the water tower. Boys with .22 rifles shot at the object one night, and the bullets made a metallic 'twang' and caused the object to flare up bright red for a second.

'Saucer nests' have been reported in Northern Queensland, Australia. One morning in January 1966, a farmer near Tully was driving a tractor near a lagoon. He was surprised to see a large, disc-shaped object suddenly ascend from the water reeds 25 yards away. It rose to an altitude of about 60 feet, then tilted a little to one side and vanished speedily to the southwest. In the reeds the farmer found a circular, flattened area, about 30 feet in diameter, within an otherwise undisturbed, dense reed growth.

The flattened stems were radially distributed in an anticlockwise manner. The reeds had been torn free of the bottom so that the whole mass was floating on the surface of the water. By the evening, the upper surfaces of the flattened reeds had turned brown. Other nests were subsequently found in the same area, and have also been reported in other parts of the world.

The anticlockwise flattening of the reeds is significant, as evidence of anticlockwise, energetic motion around discoid UFOs is found in numerous incidents. A typhoon involves an anticlockwise motion and levitates millions of tons of water as it crosses the ocean. Trevor Constable believes that UFOs which levitate themselves make use of the same etheric or orgone energy. The high organic potential associated with the Tully creatures withdraws the orgone charge in the reeds under them and pulls them free of the bottom. The browning of the upper edge of the flattened reeds could be caused by the whirling plasma around the creatures.

The Queensland UFO nests seem far more like a nesting area for living creatures than a base for space beings. The nesting of UFOs on water amid the reeds is reminiscent of living organisms that fly, such as geese and ducks. The object taking flight when a noisy tractor approached is reminiscent of startled wildfowl. In the same area of Queensland, a discoidal UFO was observed pacing an airliner at high altitude. UFOs have similarly paced airliners, bombers, and jet fighters all over the world. Seabirds characteristically pace ships at sea, often accompanying them for hundreds of miles.

In January 1958 a 21-year-old Australian was chased by a dome-shaped object that emitted a

narrow light beam toward the ground. He was so frightened that he drove home on a half-flat tyre, followed for 5 kilometers by the object, which was about 50 meters away and 10 meters above the ground. The object caused radio interference, and overtook his car at over 100 kilometers per hour. Beams of light emerging from UFOs are often reported and need not mean that they are aerial vehicles; instead, a lifeform could be 'probing' the observers.

Flashing lights, too, need not imply a structured flying machine. In October 1973 a law-enforcement officer in Mississippi saw a glowing top-shaped object with flashing lights that floated slowly through the air. It hovered over an electrical power installation and emitted hissing torchlike jets. The man followed it for several miles, then it came closer and his engine, car lights, and radio failed. The object departed, and after about 15 minutes the car and radio resumed operation. The officer again caught up with the object and watched it slowly turn upside down, then abruptly vanish.

Many UFOs appear to be attracted to power plants, power lines, radio transmitters, blast furnaces, street lights, and similar energy sources.

In 1982, while driving from Los Angeles to San Francisco, Keith Boyer and a friend sighted a ball consisting of a series of lights, merging and rotating into each other, surrounded by a fuzzy mist. It was about 50 feet across and looked like a living entity. The object had been hovering about 100 feet off the ground, but then began to descend, and became uncomfortably bright – a mixture of deep-rich blues, greens, yellows, and reds. At some point a beam of light from the object struck their car. After a blackout, Boyer remembers that he was no longer driving; his friend was. And they were 'babbling' to each other in some unknown tongue. After 10 to 15 minutes the strange mental state gradually wore off.

The rectangular UFOs or chupas seen in northeastern Brazil, which often emit beams of light and incapacitate people, could also be creatures rather than craft. On several occasions the local population has chased chupas away by shouting and banging pans.

An American couple once saw a luminous UFO resting above a small grove of trees at Lone Pine, California. The lighted area kept expanding to cover most of the entity and then contracting, with a period that matched the observers' respiration rate. The lightform then tilted and suddenly sped off without a sound, moving a distance of 10 miles in a matter of seconds. As it did so the trees leaned with it instead of being blasted backward.

The couple drove out into the desert and stayed beneath the object for an hour and a half. A sort of heavy fog rolled out of openings in its sides. They felt that it was looking at them, and were suffused with a feeling of reverence, beauty, and humility. When the man prepared to take a photograph, the entity sped to the right, then shot straight up.

There are several reports of UFOs apparently responding directly to the thoughts of observers. In 1950 a US Navy plane operating over Korea was followed by 2 objects travelling at up to 1200 miles per hour. They had a silvered-mirror appearance and a surrounding red glow. The radar on the plane indicated 1.5 miles between the objects and the planes when the objects suddenly seemed to halt, back up, and begin a jittering motion. At the moment when the guns were readied to fire, the radar went haywire. An attempt was made to call the aircraft carrier on different frequencies, but each time the channel was blocked by a strange buzzing noise.

There are also many reports of UFOs mimicking human behaviour. In several cases, high-powered lights have been flashed at luminous UFOs, and the latter have blinked back in similar sequences. At 10.30 PM on 14 April 1991, a young woman in Oklahoma saw a very large silver object, with a

red light and 'antenna' on top and 'windows' and rows of blue and red lights. She was extremely happy but at the same time crying and frightened. She began jumping and for some reason jumped 2 steps to the left. The object responded by jerking 2 'steps' to her left. She thought this was wonderful so she jumped 2 steps to the right, and the object responded by moving to the right.

This was repeated several times.

Clearly, such antics are not what we would expect of extraterrestrial spacecraft!

6. Close encounters

Allen Hynek, the 'father of ufology', distinguished 3 types of close encounters:

- close encounters of the first kind: objects seen on the ground or at a short distance from the observer;
- close encounters of the second kind: the same, with physical effects on the environment, instruments, or observers;
- close encounters of the third kind: sightings of alien entities, either by themselves or in association with a UFO.

Alien abductions, in which humans are allegedly kidnapped and subjected to intrusive medical examinations inside a UFO, are now sometimes classed as 'close encounters of the fourth kind'.

Studies show that the probability of a UFO close encounter peaks between 1 and 3 AM, and that they are most likely to occur in remote and sparsely populated areas. Some examples of close encounters (mainly CE3s) are given below. They tend to contain elements of 'high strangeness', and show that credible people sometimes report incredible things.

The first example comes from 1922, long before the modern UFO age began. A man in Nebraska saw a large circular object land near his home and an 8-foot-tall being step out. The man was deeply religious and thought the being must be Satan. He mumbled, 'Get thee behind me, Satan,' and turned his back on it. Then he noticed another disc coming down from the sky; it hovered above him as if to protect him from the landed creature. Next the witness heard voices emanating from the airborne saucer, quoting Biblical texts, causing the other creature to take to its heels. It left tracks similar to hoofmarks, and went through a barbed wire fence, which was left burning hot and severed, as if it had been burned through with a welding torch.

There was a similar report from Nebraska in the same year. On 22 February 1922 a man was out hunting when he saw a large, dark object fly overhead, blotting out the stars. He hid behind a tree and watched it land. Next he saw 'a magnificent flying creature' which landed like an airplane and left tracks in the snow. It was at least 8 feet tall. The man tried to follow its tracks but never caught up with it.

A central question posed by cases like this is: To what extent did the events described take place in our physical reality? The best way to determine their physical reality would be to attempt to record the events with cameras, videos, tape recorders, etc. In practice, witnesses rarely have the means to do this while the experience is taking place. It is noteworthy that although quite a few photographs of UFOs have been taken, usually from some distance, there are only a handful of photos of UFO

entities, and many of these can be dismissed as hoaxes.

Sometimes researchers find that expensive cameras and electronic instruments malfunction at the critical moment or that developed film comes out blank – a phenomenon well known to investigators of other weird manifestations, such as monsters, ghosts, and poltergeists.

Further clues to the reality status of close encounters can be obtained by comparing the testimony of different witnesses. Multiple-witness close encounters are unfortunately rather rare, but where they have happened, reports by different witnesses are sometimes mutually corroborative and sometimes mutually contradictory, at least in part. In the above cases we have only the testimony of a single witness, plus the footprints, and a broken wire fence that appeared to have been subjected to intense heat. Something seems to have manifested physically, but the voices, for example, could have existed solely in the man's head, and clearly reflected his own religious beliefs.

If the crafts and beings in these cases were physical manifestations, where did they come from? From another part of our physical universe, or from some nonphysical realm? If the beings originated in our physical reality, and are not robots or other artificially created entities, they must be the product of a long process of evolution, just like animals and humans on earth, and the craft must be technological constructs. But if they originated in another realm, this need not be the case. Instead they could be temporary materializations of shape-shifting elemental and psychic energies from the astral plane.

A parallel can be drawn with the Tibetan concept of 'tulpas' – thought-forms that are said to assume life independent of the mind or minds that create and sustain them. A tulpa may take on a solid form, and yogis claim they can even carry on intelligent conversations with these mind-created creatures. The duration of a tulpa's life and its vitality are in direct proportion to the energy expended in its creation. In UFO close encounters, of course, the manifestations are not the deliberate creation of the witnesses themselves.

In the case of close encounters that leave no physical evidence and to which there are no independent witnesses, it is possible that the entire experience was 'hallucinatory'. This in turn raises the question: To what extent was the experience generated by the witness's own mind and to what extent by other entities or forces?

The cases presented below raise similar questions. And the limited evidence available leaves plenty of room for speculation.

On 18 October 1954, in Royan, France, a couple saw 2 ball-shaped objects in the sky, one orange and the other red, joined by a bright beam of light. When the light went out, they landed. A small creature got out of each craft and went into the other. Both objects then flew away with a tremendous flash.

At 6:30 AM on 6 November 1957, 12-year-old Everett Clark of Dante, Tennessee, opened the door to let out his dog, Frisky, and saw a peculiar oblong object in a field about 100 yards from the house. He thought he was dreaming and went back inside. When he called the dog 20 minutes later, the object was still there, and Frisky was standing near it, along with several dogs from the neighbourhood.

Also near the object were 2 men and 2 women in ordinary clothing. One of the men made several attempts to catch Frisky, and later another dog, but had to give up for fear of being bitten. The strange people talked like German soldiers the boy had seen in movies. He watched them walk right into the wall of the object, which then took off straight up without a sound.

Another attempt to steal a dog was made at dusk the same day, this time in Everittstown, New Jersey. By some weird coincidence, the name of this town resembles the boy's name in the above case. A man named John Trasco went outside to feed his dog and saw a brilliant egg-shaped object hovering in front of his barn.

In his path he met a 3-feet-tall being 'with putty-coloured face and large frog-like eyes', who said in broken English: 'We are peaceful people, we only want your dog' (this sort of absurd dialogue is typical of close encounters).

The strange being was told in no uncertain terms to go back where he belonged. He ran away and his machine was seen to take off straight up moments later. The being wore a green suit with shining buttons, a green cap, and gloves.

In the evening of 26 June 1962, in Verona, Italy, a woman and her son and daughter observed a silvery disc, the apparent diameter of the moon, manoeuvring in the sky for about an hour. They finally went home. Around 3 AM one of them was awakened by a feeling of intense cold and perceived a greenish light in the room. In the window a sharply defined human shape, delineating a semi-transparent body, was visible. The apparition had a huge bald head. The witness screamed, awakening the two others, and they saw the apparition shrink and vanish 'like a TV image when one turns off the set'.

One morning in October 1963, on Whidbey Island, Washington, a middle-aged woman who had seen a strange craft near her house the previous July observed a gray object, 3.5 meters long, hovering less than 2 meters above the ground. Though the transparent front part she could see 3 figures. Suddenly one of the occupants was standing on the grass. He was clothed in 'asbestos-textured coveralls', and neither the face nor the hands or feet were visible. When she asked, 'What do you want?' the answer, in English, was: 'One of our party knows you; we will return.' The object then decreased in size, tilted, partially sank into the ground, grew to its previous size, and departed to the east, producing steam, a flash, and a noise.

In the early morning of 1 July 1965, a French farmer, Maurice Masse, was in his lavender field near Valensole, when he heard a whistling sound and discovered that an object had landed. At first he thought it was a helicopter or an experimental craft, but when he approached he found that it was egg-shaped, the size of a car, with a round cockpit on top, and 4 legs. He then saw 2 small beings examining his lavender plants.

They were less than 4 feet tall, with large slanted eyes and very large bald heads, dressed in one-piece gray-green suits. One of them took a small tube from its container and pointed it at Masse, who found himself unable to move. The 2 beings communicated with each other by making gargling noises, without moving their mouths. They exuded a sense of peace. They got back into the craft via a sliding door, the legs whirled and retracted, and it took off. First it hovered a few feet from the ground, then it rose obliquely with the take-off speed of a jet plane. When it was about 60 yards away, it seemed to vanish.

It was about 20 minutes before the farmer regained control of his muscles. The ground where the craft had rested was soaked with moisture, and hardened to the consistency of concrete. Geometrically spaced indentations were also found. Elevated calcium levels were found in the soil, and no lavender plants would grow at the landing site until 10 years later. For several weeks after the incident, Masse was overcome with drowsiness. The police authorities regarded him as absolutely trustworthy. He subsequently saw another object, which he described as 'beautiful, with many pretty colours whirling around it'.

At 9:50 AM on 19 January 1967, a man called Ted Jones was driving along a highway in West Virginia when he found his way blocked by a large object hovering a few feet off the ground. It was a large metal sphere, 20 feet in diameter, the colour of dull aluminium. It had 4 legs with casterlike wheels, a small window, and a sort of propeller on the underside.

The propeller started spinning faster, and the object ascended into the sky. A few days later an article on UFOs by John Keel was published, illustrated with drawings of odd-shaped objects, many thought up by the artist, who had produced his layout many weeks earlier. His drawings included an exact replica (or prototype?) of the sphere Jones had seen, complete with wheeled legs and propeller. Such an object has never been described before or since in UFO literature.

At 9:30 PM on 2 November 1967, 2 Navajo Indian youths, Guy Tossie and Will Begay, were driving on a highway just outside Ririe, Idaho, when there was a sudden blinding flash in front of their car.

The flash was followed by the abrupt appearance of an eight-foot-wide domed saucer with flashing green and orange lights around its rim. The car stopped as the object hovered about five feet above the road, bathing the area in a green light.

Though the transparent dome, the witnesses could see two small occupants. When the dome opened, one figure floated down to the ground. It stood about three and a half feet tall and had a kind of backpack that protruded behind its hairless head. Its oval face was heavily pitted and creased, its ears were large and high, its eyes were small and round, and its mouth was slit-like. No nose was visible on the deeply scarred face.

The entity approached the car and opened the driver's-side door. When it slid behind the wheel, the two youths moved over to the right. Then, with the object in a fixed position a few feet in front, the car was driven or towed well out into a wheat field. When the car stopped, Tossie opened the door and ran to a farm-house a quarter mile away. A bright light, apparently from the second occupant, followed him. Begay, meanwhile, cowered in the front seats as the entity spoke to him in unintelligible birdlike sounds. When the second entity returned to the car, the first emerged and the two then floated up into the object, which rose out of sight in zigzag fashion.

Tossie was so frightened that he had difficulty telling the farmer and his family the story. When they finally accompanied him back to the field, they found Begay in shock, sitting speechless in the car with his eyes closed. The car lights were on, and the engine was running. The youths reported the incident to the deputy sheriff, and the state police investigated.

Others had apparently seen lights in the area, and some farmers reported that their cattle had bolted during the evening for unknown reasons.



Left. Alien encountered by Guy Tossie and Will Begay, November 1967 (courtesy of Harry Trumbore).

In the early morning of 1 November 1968, a French doctor was awakened by the sound of his 14-month-old son crying. His son was standing in his crib pointing at the window: behind the shutter a bright light was moving. After the child had gone back to sleep, the doctor went out onto the balcony. He saw 2 glowing discs in the sky, silvery-white on top and bright red underneath.

Each had a tall antenna on top and one on either side, and they were directing a narrow beam of white light towards the ground below. The 2 objects slowly drew closer and merged into a single object, about 200 feet in diameter and 50 feet thick. It approached the doctor, then tilted 90 degrees so that the beam of light struck him. He then heard a loud bang, and the object evaporated into a whitish cloud that dissipated with the wind. A thin thread of light rose high into the sky before vanishing as a white dot and exploding like a firework.

A few days earlier the doctor had accidentally cut a vein in his leg while chopping wood, and a decade earlier he had stepped on a landmine in Algeria, leaving his right side partially paralyzed. After the above sighting, he found that the swelling and pain from his leg injury had vanished, and the chronic after-effects of the injuries he had sustained in the Algerian war improved dramatically in the days that followed.

A few days after the encounter, the doctor and his child each developed a strange, reddish, triangular mark on the abdomen, and this mark recurred in successive years. Strange paranormal phenomena began to take place around the doctor and his family, including poltergeist activity and unexplained disturbances in electrical circuits.

The doctor began to have mysterious meetings with a strange, nameless man he called 'Mr Bied'. He would hear a whistling noise inside his head and would feel guided to walk or drive to a certain location where he would meet the man, who would discuss his UFO experience and paranormal matters. Mr Bied caused him to experience apparent teleportation and time travel, including a distressing episode with alternative landscapes on a road that does not exist. The stranger also once visited the doctor at his home accompanied by a 3-feet-tall humanoid with mummified skin, who remained motionless while his eyes quickly darted around the room.

The doctor experienced uncontrolled levitation on at least one occasion. Several other cases of levitation have been reported in connection with UFOs. In an incident from 1954, a man who was coming back from the fields with his horse had to let go of the bridle as the animal was lifted several feet into the air when a dark, circular object flew fast over the trail they were following.

One night in December 1973, a man in Vilvoorde, Belgium, heard a strange noise outside his kitchen. Through the curtains he saw a greenish light, and when he pulled them aside he saw a small creature, about 3 feet tall, wearing a shiny one-piece suit that glowed green. It wore a transparent helmet with a tube running down to a backpack. On its stomach was a large red box that seemed to be sparking. The witness directed a flashlight beam at the being, who seemed to be using what looked like a metal detector.

The creature raised its hand and made a V-sign, then turned and walked off toward the rear wall of the garden. When it reached the wall, it continued walking straight up it, remaining perpendicular to the surface, and then apparently walked down the other side! Moments later the witness saw a small craft in the distance.

At about 6:30 PM on 27 September 1989 in the Russian city of Voronezh, 3 schoolchildren and about 40 adults saw a pink or red light in the sky, which turned into a dark red sphere, about 30 feet in diameter. It flew away but returned a few minutes later and hovered over a park. A hatch opened in the bottom and a being appeared. It was about 10 feet tall, had no neck, and wore silver overalls

and bronze-coloured boots.

It had 3 eyes; 2 were whitish, but the middle eye – or lamp, as one witness called it – was red and had no pupil. The being scanned the terrain, the hatch closed, and the sphere descended, brushing against a poplar tree, which bent and stayed in that position. The object, which measured about 45 feet wide and 19 feet high, then landed.

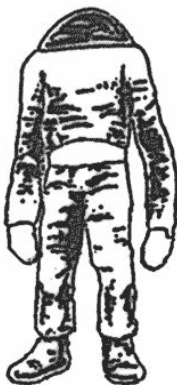
The tall being was accompanied by a small robot. The being said something and a small luminous rectangle appeared on the ground. It said something else and the rectangle disappeared. It then adjusted something on the robot's chest, causing it to walk in a mechanical way.

One of the boys watching cried out in fear. The being, whose eyes seemed to emit light, looked at him, and the boy froze. When the witnesses started shouting, the sphere and being vanished on the spot. But 5 minutes later the object and being reappeared. It now held a 4-feet-long tube at its side. When the being pointed it at a 16-year-old boy, the boy became invisible.

The being then reentered the sphere, and as the object flew away, the boy reappeared. After taking off, the UFO almost instantaneously became a mere dot and disappeared in the sky. An investigation revealed that the radioactivity level at the landing site was double the background level. Traces were found where the craft's 4 legs had stood. There was an area of flattened grass, and the soil was found to have turned to the consistency of stone.

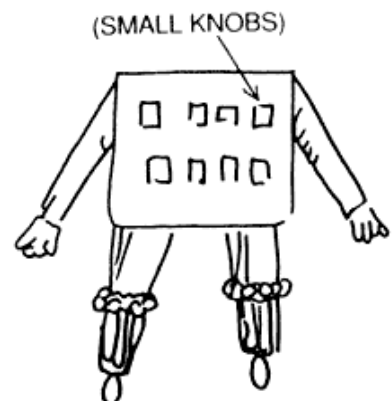
It was calculated that an object wighting 11 tons had stood there.

Right. Illustration of the UFO seen in Voronezh (Russia), September 1989.



Left. The giant alien seen at Voronezh.

Right. The robot, as drawn by a schoolgirl (courtesy of Jacques Vallee).



Thousands of Voronezh residents observed several appearances of UFOs between 23 and 29 September 1989, and at least 3 landings took place, witnessed by over 30 people. As in other cases, many of the sightings occurred in polluted areas: the park used to be a garbage dump, and UFOs also visited the electricity plant and the site of a future nuclear plant.

In 1967 a woman was driving to New York when her car was stopped by a humming, domed, disc-shaped object. A bright light beamed down from the object and she began to hear voices. They didn't sound like male or female voices, but were broken and jerky, like a weird chorus of voices. They named a friend she knew and said that at that moment her friend's brother was involved in a terrible accident miles away. This message proved correct.

Although close encounters sometimes have an undeniable physical component, it is clear that they frequently involve paranormal phenomena as well. They are sometimes similar to dream and trance states and ghostly experiences, and can be highly surreal. Michael Talbot writes:

[In] the literature one can find cases in which UFO entities sing absurd songs or throw strange objects (such as potatoes) at witnesses; cases that start out as straightforward abductions aboard spacecraft but end up as hallucinogenic journeys through a series of Dantesque realities; and cases in which humanoid aliens shapeshift into birds, giant insects, and other phantasmagoric creatures.

As already stated, in the absence of evidence of physical effects on the environment, of independent testimony, and ideally photographic and film records as well, it is impossible to be certain how much of a UFO sighting or close encounter took place on the physical plane and how much on the astral/mental plane.

In cases involving multiple witnesses, the witnesses sometimes tell the same story, but not always. In one case, a boy saw a hemisphere with 3 windows and 3 entities inside, while his friend saw only a white light. And even though he was 200 yards away he saw one of the faces in detail as if it were very close.

In another case, a woman in England saw a UFO over a major road during the rush hour, yet no one else reported it. There are several possible explanations for this. It could be that the UFO existed only in the witness's mind, being either a self-generated hallucination or one induced by another agency. Or the witness might have seen the UFO clairvoyantly. John Keel writes:

It is most likely that some UFOs are masses of plastic energy normally invisible to us, but which can – when conditions are just right – alter their frequencies and enter the visible spectrum. In other words, UFOs are always present in the skies but can only be seen at certain times ... or by certain people; people with latent or active psychic abilities whose eyes are turned to see slightly beyond the visible spectrum.

Keel points out that a sighting often begins with a reddish glow marking the emergence of the object from the invisible band of the spectrum into infrared and then into the narrow band of visible light. Or, if the object is passing through the visible band to the higher frequencies it is cyan (bluish-green) before it fades into blue and then enters the ultraviolet range.

In some close-encounter cases, witnesses were later unable to relocate the site of their experience. Buildings and landmarks clearly seen at the time seem to vanish, and roads and highways seem to disappear. As Keel notes, this is a well-known phenomenon in psychic lore, probably because some people are prone to psychic hallucinations. Here, too, witnesses might sometimes be turning in to the 'superspectrum', i.e. to astral realities. In some UFO reports the aliens apparently could not see

the witnesses or expressed surprise that humans could see them.

Alien entities sometimes make use of paralyzing rays and similar devices. In a case from August 1947, a geology professor on a rock-hunting expedition in the mountains of northeastern Italy came upon a red, lens-shaped object, about 30 feet wide and 18 feet high. He saw 2 small, green-skinned humanoid creatures and shouted out to them, asking them who they were. As he did so he raised his alpinist's pick. One of the 2 creatures then put its right hand to its belt, and there was a puff of smoke or a ray of some kind.

The pick flew out of the professor's hand, and he found himself on the ground, paralyzed. The beings retrieved the pick and returned to their craft. As the witness struggled to sit up the craft shot into the air. If cases like this are more than just hallucinations, they could involve the use of paranormal forces rather than high-tech physical gadgets.

Witnesses who find themselves immobilized may be in a trance state. John Keel points out that a close-encounter experience commonly begins with a sudden flash of light or a sound – a humming, buzzing, or beeping. Witnesses' attention is riveted to a pulsing, flickering light of dazzling intensity, and they often find themselves rooted to the spot, unable to move.

The flickering light then goes through a series of color changes and a seemingly physical object begins to form, such as an unusual flying machine or an entity of some kind.

The percipient is first entranced by the flickering light. From the moment he feels paralyzed he loses touch with reality and begins to hallucinate. The light remains a light, but his or her mind constructs something else. The paralysis is a form of hypnosis.

When he comes out of his trance and looks at his watch he finds that hours have passed even though he thought he only watched the light for a few seconds.

In a religious miracle such as that at Garabandal, Spain, in the 1960s, crowds surrounded the small children as they entered trances and conversed with entities only they could see. The children sometimes remained motionless for hours, but when they came out of their trances they thought only minutes had passed.

Keel adds that if hallucinations really are part of the close-encounter phenomenon, 'a large part of our descriptive data is completely false and worthless'. On the other hand, hallucinations alone cannot of course account for the many radar sightings, photographs, and landing events which leave physical traces.

Close-encounter witnesses often report that a variety of paranormal events, especially poltergeist phenomena, start happening following their sighting, and sometimes shortly before it. Some develop psychic powers such as telepathy and psychic healing, while others have a past history of paranormal experiences. Some witnesses report visits by sinister 'men in black', who make threats in an effort to silence them, or they see apparitions, which sometimes attack them.

Not only witnesses, but also ufologists claim strange things started happening to them after they began to study the phenomenon, including UFO sightings or abductions, harassment by mysterious persons, and a wide range of paranormal experiences.

Several surveys have been conducted into the type of people who report UFO experiences. Since the samples tend to be fairly small, the results have been somewhat contradictory. However, a general finding is that UFO experiencers tend to be mentally healthy individuals with no obvious

neurotic or psychotic symptoms, though they may have more psychological problems than the general populace.

One study found that UFO experiencers in general were not more psychopathological, less intelligent, or more fantasy prone and hypnotizable than other people. However, intense UFO experiencers did tend to be more fantasy prone and to have a higher belief in UFOs and paranormal phenomena.

Close-encounter experiencers are often, though by no means always, psychic. According to a survey by the British UFO organization BUFORA, close-encounter witnesses have a high rate of self-reported ESP, a high rate of self-reported UFO and 'flying' dreams, and they tend to be status inconsistent (i.e. to hold jobs not consistent with their intelligence or social status). Witnesses exhibiting status-inconsistency had severe difficulties adjusting to virtually all areas of life – marital, social, business, and professional. A reasonably high number of witnesses reported having religious or mystical experiences, but tended to turn away from the conventional church.

Kenneth Ring found that although UFO encounter experiencers and near-death experiencers are not especially fantasy prone, they tend to be sensitive to nonordinary realities and their denizens, even as children. Both types of experiencers describe a wide spectrum of enduring psychophysical changes following their encounters, such as allergies, mood fluctuations, disturbances in nearby electrical equipment, and paranormal abilities and healing gifts.

Ring also found that those who had undergone a UFO or NDE encounter, and even those who merely took a deep interest in them, tend to report that it has made a positive difference in their lives; they speak of having a greater appreciation for themselves and others, for the environment, and for the world at large, and undergo a marked shift towards religious universalism. They tend to believe that 'higher forces' or a purposive intelligence are orchestrating these experiences and propelling the human race towards a more spiritual level of consciousness.

On the other hand, close-encounter witnesses sometimes react to their experiences very negatively. They may become nervous wrecks, divorce their wives, lose their jobs, or go bankrupt. After a close encounter, a West Virginia high school teacher soberly informed his students that he was really a Venusian. Many of the entities encountered in close encounters seem to practise deception, and to strengthen any tendency of self-delusion on the part of witnesses.

As John Keel notes, many of the 'gods' and other unusual entities encountered throughout the ages have caused similar havoc in people's lives.

7. The visitors

The 'aliens' described by witnesses over the past 50 years display a great diversity of shape, size, skin colour, and other features. Patrick Huyghe writes:

Through the years there have been aliens of all colors: black, white, red, orange, yellow, blue, violet, and of course, gray and green. They can be minuscule, just a few inches tall, or tower above the witnesses, standing 10 feet tall or more. They range from small hairy dwarfs to bald giants. Some look nearly human, others comically alien. A few are living manifestations of a nightmare. While they often look like flesh-and-blood or metallic beings,

many can perform ghostlike feats such as walking through walls. They display various eccentricities in their dress, behavior, and speech content. Some act like saints, others like demons. And when it comes to telling fibs, it has been noted, no politician on Earth could do better.

Most aliens are described as bipeds, though there have been a few reports of unipeds as well. Some aliens have been seen to float in the air rather than walk. Some appear to have no arms, others have more than 2, and occasionally the upper limbs take the form of tentacles or wings. The arms usually end in hands, which commonly have only 3 or 4 fingers. Some entities have unusually long fingers and arms extending below their knees. In a few cases, claws or strange tool-like instruments have been reported instead of hands. Nearly all aliens have heads, often abnormally large, but a few have been described as having no head, and some appear to have no neck.

Nearly all aliens have 2 eyes, but a few have 3, one, or none. They are often larger, rounder, or more slitlike than a human's, and tend to wrap further around their heads. They are usually solid black, with no pupils, whites, or irises. Sometimes their eyes are described as glowing, as multiple like a fly's, or as possessing vertical pupils. Aliens often lack a nose, having only nostrils, or they may possess an extremely prominent one. Their mouths are usually small and lipless. Reports of teeth are extremely rare. Some aliens have no ears, or mere orifices, or have ears resembling those of a calf or mouse.

The skin of aliens also shows great variation. The 'grays' usually have smooth, pale, hairless, skin, either pasty-looking or translucent. Witnesses are often unsure whether they are seeing the aliens' naked skin or tight-fitting clothing. Some aliens have wrinkled skin, pockmarked or ruddy skin, or scaly, reptilian skin. There are also many reports of extremely hairy aliens.

Huyghe divides the 'visitors' into 4 main classes, subdivided into types:

1. humanoid (types: 'human', short gray, short non-gray, giant, nonclassic)
2. animalian (types: hairy mammalian, reptilian, amphibian, insectoid, avian)
3. robotic (types: metallic, fleshy)
4. exotic (types: apparitional, physical)

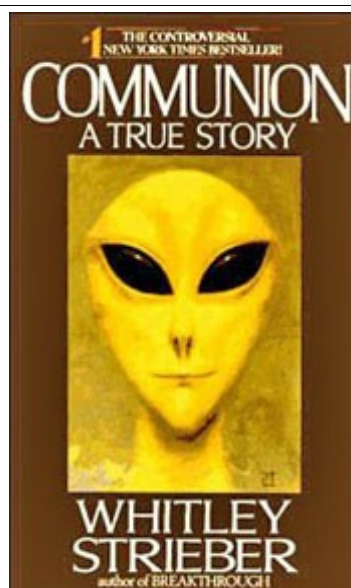
The dominant popular image of aliens today is that of short humanlike beings with lightbulb-shaped heads, almond-shaped black eyes, and fragile bodies – the 'grays'. But even among grays there are many variants. Although most are about 3.5 feet (1 meter) tall, others are 5, 6, or 7 feet tall. And while most have a pasty, hairless skin, some have brown or black skin and wispy hair. Significantly, although short gray entities are ubiquitous today, they were largely absent from UFO reports prior to the 1960s.

Huyghe says:

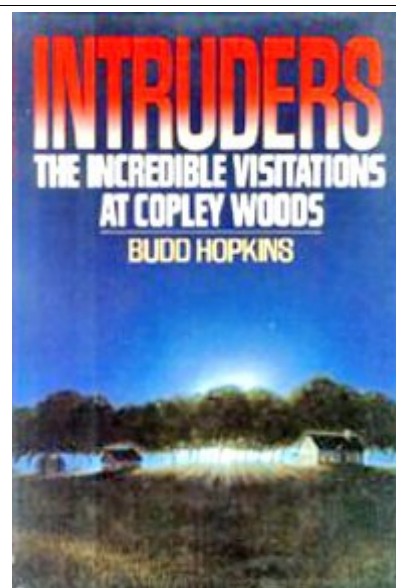
The very earliest reports of entities involved primarily humanlike beings. And while the human types in the form of the blond 'Nordics' were once responsible for about a quarter of the total cases, since the 1960s they have not been quite as common. Similarly, the hairy dwarfs that were reported so frequently in the 1950s are rather infrequent in contemporary accounts.

... [Prior] to 1987, when Whitley Strieber's *Communion* and Budd Hopkins's *Intruders* were published in England, less than a quarter of the entities reported in Britain's abduction cases were of the small, bald-headed entities. But after the books appeared there, more than half of

the cases involved the 'American standardized alien' ... Because American abduction cases get more publicity than any other such cases, it seems as if the image of the Gray has been more or less imposed on the rest of the world as the standard alien type.



Left and right. The front cover of Strieber's and Hopkin's publications.



The fact that the mass media and popular culture (books, films, TV programmes, etc.) have influenced the appearance assumed by 'aliens' clearly shows that we are not dealing with purely physical manifestations; popular beliefs and expectations play a major role in shaping the UFO phenomenon. It is also interesting that, on the whole, the UFO phenomenon has tended to keep one step ahead of human technology, progressing from aerial ships to dirigibles to ghost rockets to flying saucers, with aliens' current activities including biogenetic engineering.

Alien types also reflect national characteristics, though this influence has diminished somewhat through the media's role in turning the Gray into the prototypical alien:

From South America came reports of small swarthy dwarfs who were fairly aggressive, while from Europe and in particular, England, many reports were of tall blond blue-eyed beings with a much friendlier disposition. Meanwhile in North America the standard Short Gray with its shockingly indifferent disposition predominated. This once apparent geographical difference among alien types presents a major stumbling block to the reality of UFO extraterrestrials. The phenomenon seems to mold itself to conform to the culture and time in which it appears. This implies that the encounters are more likely visions than visitations by extraterrestrials.

In a South African case from 1974, when asked by the hypnotist what the aliens looked like, the witness made the telling comment: 'They looked how I wanted them to look.'

Many early reports, especially from France and South America, mentioned beings in diving suits and helmets with tubes extending down into backpacks, reflecting the prevailing belief that aliens would be unable to breathe our atmosphere. Later, as the contactéé phenomenon began to spread and Star Trek suggested that earthlike planets existed throughout the galaxy, the diving suits and breathing apparatus gave way to silver jumpsuits. Some accounts feature entities wearing strange costumes with sashes, capes, and insignia, but it seems unlikely that outmoded human clothing styles are the latest fashions on distant planets!

The nature of the contacts between humans and aliens has evolved. In the early days UFO occupants often acted like shy strangers. They were seen repairing their craft, collecting samples of soil, rocks, or plants, and often fled if observed. Some did, however, talk to humans, or paralyzed them, or occasionally tried to abduct them. The 1950s were also the heyday of the contactés and friendly 'space brothers'. Nowadays, aliens are much less likely to take evasive action if humans come across them. In fact, the past 2 decades have seen an explosion in the number of abduction reports.

Animals tend to be afraid of alien entities, as well as of their craft. For instance, after seeing a disc-shaped UFO one evening, a man was awakened in the night and saw 2 small creatures wearing silver suits outside his house, gathering soil and vegetation samples. He ordered his German shepherd to attack but it refused and ran back into the house.

Aliens' linguistic skills vary markedly. They may speak the language of witnesses perfectly, or they may speak it with a 'foreign' accent, or they may speak an unknown language. Other aliens are described as making whining, growling, gargling, cackling, buzzing, or birdlike sounds. Reports of telepathic communication are common, both among aliens themselves, and between aliens and humans.

UFO entities have claimed to have some interesting names: e.g. Affa, A-lan, Ashtar, Ausso, Kronin, Orthon, Quazgaa, Semjase (pronounced: Sem-ya-see), Xeno, Zandark. Their names often seem to be adopted from mythology. For instance, 'Kronin' resembles 'Cronus', the Roman god of time, and 'Ashtar' resembles 'Ashtoreth', the Phoenician goddess of love.

The statements made by UFO entities frequently seem to be a cross between disinformation and sheer nonsense, and sometimes have a distinctly surreal quality. Consider, for example, the following enigmatic comment made by Semjase, allegedly a female alien from Pleiades:

'General public contacts are not in our best interests at this time, and besides, they would not convey a correct significance for the state of mind in which we now exist'.

The following alien message is more revealing:

'We refuse to be your answer. Just when you think you have us pinned down, we'll tell you something else. No one belief system can encompass all of reality in a complex universe'.

Aliens often claim to have visited earth in the past, and to have helped to create humankind by genetic manipulation. Sometimes they say they have hidden bases on earth. In the early days, they warned against the dangers of nuclear tests, but nowadays they warn against more general environmental disasters, as if reflecting changing human concerns.

Sometimes they claim our activities affect them, which would make sense if they are closely associated with our earth. They frequently point out the deplorable qualities of human beings, and many have stressed the importance of universal love. They have repeatedly forecast war and mass landings but all such predictions have failed to come true.

In one case, the aliens claimed they stole electricity from power lines but in amounts too small for power companies to detect! On several occasions in the early days they claimed that our use of radar had caused several UFOs to crash – an equally unlikely story. On the other hand, the large-scale use of radar, which emits high-energy microwave pulses, must be causing major disturbances in the ethereal borderland, and this could be a factor in the increased sightings of UFOs since the Second World War.

One woman recalled under hypnosis that aliens had shown her a special motor. She was determined to build it, but the design proved to be completely unworkable. There are 2 cases in which aliens promoted an ineffective cancer cure, namely injecting vinegar into cancerous tumours – an old folk remedy.

Channelled messages from 'aliens' are common nowadays and need to be treated with as much skepticism as other channelled messages (even in the 19th century a few mediums claimed to channel messages from Martians). The messages could come from the recipient's own subconscious or superconscious mind, or from denizens of the astral world, who seem to delight in play-acting and tend to mirror ideas found in the recipient's mind or the wider mind of Gaia. The communications sometimes contain technical gibberish about UFOs' means of propulsion. References to the soul, reincarnation, and higher planes or 'dimensions' are commonplace in channelled material and reflect the resurgence of these 'new age' (or rather timeless) ideas.

During the 1954 UFO wave, which one researcher called 'a festival of absurdities', a Frenchman was suddenly confronted with a UFO occupant who pointed a gun at him and said something he could not understand. When the Frenchman spoke to him in Russian, the 'alien' answered in the same language, and asked whether he was in Spain or Italy, and how far he was from Germany – though he was in France at the time! He then asked the time, and the Frenchman replied, 'It's 2:30', only to be bluntly told, 'You lie, it's 2 o'clock'. Clearly we are not dealing here with a member of a superintelligent extraterrestrial civilization!

Aliens frequently ask about the time, and this could reflect the confused and disoriented mental state of such visitants. At the same time, such communications may be prompting us to question our conventional notions of reality. Vallee says that alien communications 'often have the deep poetic and paradoxical quality of Eastern religious tales' (such as the Zen koan, 'What is the sound of one hand clapping?').

Speaking of the UFO phenomenon in general, Kenneth Ring says:

'Mind at Large has given humanity a cosmic koan to dwell upon, for we are all disciples in the mystery school that life itself represents'.

UFO occupants definitely seem to want to give us the impression that they are of extraterrestrial origin (or perhaps we want to give ourselves that impression). They have variously indicated that they are from Mercury, Venus, Mars, Titan (a moon of Saturn), a 'galaxy' near Uranus (!), the 'galaxy' of Ganymede (Ganymede is actually a moon of Jupiter!), 'Clarion' (a planet allegedly hidden from us by the moon), the Pleiades, Sirius, Orion, Reticulum, 'Hoova' (wherever that might be), and 'a very distant planet with many advantages for earthlings'.

By contrast, the occupants of the mysterious airships sighted over the US in 1896-97 reportedly claimed to come from Kansas, from Cuba, from 'a place where it doesn't rain', and one witness was even told, 'We are from anywhere... but we'll be in Greece tomorrow'!

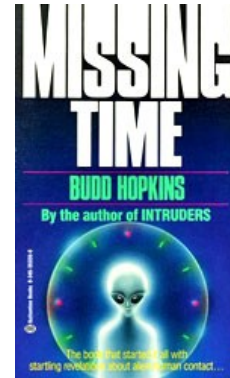
8. Alien abductions - 1

Reports of people being abducted by aliens were very rare in the 1950s and 60s but started to multiply during the early 70s. And they began to assume epidemic proportions following the

publication of Budd Hopkins' *Missing Time* in 1980 and Whitley Strieber's *Communion* in 1987. Whereas abductions initially seemed to be one-time happenings, abductees began to report multiple experiences going back to their childhood, and in some cases even as far back as the late 19th century. After 1980 the abductees also began to talk of being subjected to much more invasive medical procedures.

Two surveys – which critics have dismissed as hopelessly flawed – have been interpreted by abductionists to mean that over 3 million Americans might have been abducted over the past 50 years! The fact that witnesses who take lie-detector tests usually pass them shows that they firmly believe the tale they are telling.

But almost without exception there is no compelling evidence that they have had an objective physical experience.



Abduction stories typically begin during the night while the 'victim' is driving on a lonely road or after waking up in bed. In some cases a 'spacecraft' or just a bright light is first sighted, but in other cases strange humanoid beings appear without a UFO being seen. Victims are often paralyzed or otherwise immobilized at this point.

They occasionally remember being carried or escorted on board the craft, or 'floated' through solid walls and roofs or closed doors and windows, sometimes in a beam of light. But more commonly abductees cannot recall how they ended up inside what they assume to be an alien spacecraft.

Abductees typically find themselves in a strange, brightly-lit room, often filled with sophisticated equipment. After they have been stretched out on a table, a painful 'medical' examination is carried out: cuts are made, blood is often drawn, ova or sperm are extracted, and various bodily orifices are probed. Genitals receive special attention, and reports of sexual activity between aliens and their victims have become increasingly common in recent years. The aliens who perform the examinations are grim and businesslike, and others stand around and watch.

At the end of the examination, victims' memories of the entire episode are erased, or they are asked to refrain from telling anyone what has happened. Finally, some abductees describe tours of the spaceship, discussions of ecological and geopolitical crises on earth, and even journeys to other worlds, with the exact details varying widely from one case to another.

UFO sightings involve an average of around 2.5 witnesses, whereas abductions usually involve only the person directly concerned. If 2 or more people are present, they may later recall similar experiences, or only one may claim an abduction while the others deny that the person concerned ever left their presence. For instance, an Australian woman believed she was being periodically taken on board a spacecraft. On one occasion investigators were with her when she began to describe being abducted, yet everyone else could see her still seated in a parked car.

Whatever the event entailed, it clearly did not take place on the physical level.

Whereas most UFO sightings seem to occur while witnesses are in a 'normal' state of mind, abductions often seem to have a quality about them – even to most witnesses – that suggest an altered state of consciousness. When modern abductees report being 'floated' out of their bedrooms or cars through solid walls and roofs to waiting spaceships in a beam of light, without feeling cold

as they travel upward, there is good reason to suspect that this is not a physical experience!

Many abductees and some researchers believe that alien abductors are 'extradimensional' rather than extraterrestrial. This is usually interpreted to mean that the aliens have evolved on another plane of reality or in a 'parallel universe', and have developed an advanced civilization and a technology that enables them to materialize and dematerialize at will. However, this hypothesis is just as problematic as the extraterrestrial hypothesis. The genetic and reproductive experiments reported are crude and primitive and are certainly not the work of superintelligent beings.

What's more, the idea that an essentially ethereal race would be genetically compatible with physical humans is as unlikely as the idea that aliens who had evolved on another physical planet would be. Genuine abduction experiences may well involve parapsychical levels of reality, but the 'abductors' show no sign of being evolved beings.

Abduction memories rarely emerge unaided. People who suspect they may be abductees commonly seek out help for a variety of reasons, such as vague anxieties, specific phobias, bad dreams, fragmentary and disturbing memories, or what seems like an inexplicable episode of 'missing time'. It is usually only after consultation with a psychotherapist or UFO investigator that they can articulate an elaborate 'memory' of being abducted by aliens.

The fact that most abduction memories are at least partly recovered under hypnosis is the main reason critics cite for challenging their authenticity. Hypnosis can enable people to remember more details of an event; for instance it has enabled crime victims to remember details such as a license plate number or a mugger's clothing. However, it also enables people to 'remember' things that have never happened, leading to wild confabulations; this is known as the false memory syndrome. Hypnosis can make people more suggestible and eager to please the questioner.

Many critics therefore argue that the vast majority of abduction stories are pure fabrications produced under hypnosis. They give examples from the abduction literature showing how researchers ask leading questions, and subtly and uncounsciously induce witnesses to create a tale that fits in with their own beliefs and expectations – and indeed with the abductees' own beliefs, since people do not approach abductionists unless they are already open to the idea that they have been abducted by aliens.

Abduction researchers often claim that the experiences related by abductees are so horrific and the emotions displayed so intense that they must be literally true. Randle et al. say that this is demonstrably false. They draw a parallel between tales of abduction and tales of satanic ritual abuse. The latter are based almost exclusively on testimony recovered through hypnotic regression, visualization, and other memory enhancement techniques.

Thousands of people who believe that they are the victims of satanic ritual abuse tell horrible tales of murder, mutilation, and human sacrifice. But as with abductions, there is virtually no physical or corroborative evidence, and in some cases it has been proved that the events remembered could not possibly have happened. Many of those who once believed they had been abused begin to doubt the reality of the memories after leaving therapy or finding a new therapist.

Interestingly, abduction researcher Richard Boylan took a woman who believed she had been abused based on work with another therapist and managed to convince her that she had been abducted by aliens instead! He provided her with books and articles on abductions, discussed his beliefs in extraterrestrials with her, and finally turned vague dreams into an abduction experience. The satanic ritual abuse was supposedly a 'screen memory'.

The agendas of the various abduction researchers are reflected in what they find:

- Budd Hopkins finds cold, calculating aliens who are carrying out genetic manipulation.
- John Mack finds aliens that have a new age philosophy and provide positive experiences.
- David Jacobs finds Hopkins-type aliens but they are now pursuing an agenda of domination.

Jacobs says he belongs to the 'Realist' school of abduction researchers, and attacks 'Positives' like Mack who believe that abductees may be tapping into an alternate reality and may undergo a positive transformation. He says that the Positive position is 'based on unproven metaphysical assumptions and incompetent hypnosis', and that 'hypnosis with specific New Age agendas could slant hypnotically recalled testimony to the hypnotists' beliefs'.

Mack acknowledges that the quality of abductees' experiences varies according to who does the regression, and says that Jacobs and Hopkins 'may pull out of their experiencers what they want to see'. It is noteworthy that while abduction researchers often accuse their colleagues of incompetent hypnosis, they never apply the same criticism to themselves!

Abduction 'memories' are often utterly implausible and preposterous. In a case studied by Jacobs, for example, 'Tom and Nancy' were making love when Nancy felt 'an electric jolt' go through her hips. Tom, however, felt nothing, but when he looked at the clock he was surprised to find that he had been engaged in lovemaking for about 45 minutes. 'Lucky Tom and Nancy!' you might think. But unfortunately the 'missing time' was regarded as potential evidence of alien kidnap, and under hypnosis Nancy 'remembered' being abducted – her husband had not noticed as the aliens had 'switched him off'! (Presumably when Nancy returned she 'turned him on' again, and the performance continued as if it had never been interrupted!)

Some abductees even claim that they were abducted from crowded urban settings or removed from their apartments in a beam of light without anybody else noticing thanks to the aliens' remarkable ability to 'switch people off'.

Mack tends to accept whatever 'abductees' tell him, no matter how outlandish. For instance, he regressed a young man called 'Paul' to an abduction in 1972, when he was 6 years old. Paul estimated he had already been on the 'spacecraft' about 70 times, yet he is given a standard tour as if he had never set foot on it before.

The aliens tell him that he is an alien spirit in a human body and that there are many dual-identity aliens on earth. His home planet – which is very far away but 'in this universe' – is very peaceful, and the aliens are here to try and help humanity (by abducting and violating them?!). But humans have been very violent and hostile and have killed many aliens. The aliens allegedly came here thousands of years ago, and communicated with dinosaurs who had great intelligence, compassion, and powers of precognition!

In further regressions, Paul is 'shown the world' by a hooded figure with a pointer and sees many people dying, but he is told that he himself is 'going to fix it'. Regressed to the age of 12, he 'remembers' a battle in a cellar with what 'some people call Satan'. He recalls that he was abducted at the age of 9 and a piece of bone was removed from his leg – but Mack gives no sign that he has bothered to check this detail. The aliens tell him they want him to form a group that can meet with them to enter into an 'exchange of love'. He says that the aliens have shown him 'where the creational force is', and claims to have notebooks full of 'solid' information on their 'unbelievable' technology.

'Unbelievable' is perhaps an understatement. For Paul recalls that at the age of 9 he was present at

the scene of the saucer crash near Roswell, an event that is supposed to have happened in 1947, 19 years before Paul was born! (It can't get much more 'unbelievable' than that!) Apparently, soldiers shot the aliens who had crashed, but luckily Paul came along in another craft to rescue them! Mack says that he finds Paul's fabulous tale 'compelling and persuasive' due to his 'intensity of feeling and bodily movement'. Peter Brookesmith, on the other hand, labels it 'clichéd messianic contactee drivel'.

It would of course be wrong to assume that everything remembered under hypnosis must be false. Moreover, about a quarter of abduction accounts are said to be recalled without resorting to hypnosis, and abduction experiences recalled under hypnosis are very similar to those recalled without hypnosis.

Newman and Baumeister, however, argue that 'Enacting the kind of "imaginative role-playing" characteristic of hypnosis is possible even without intentional induction of a hypnotic state.

The key to implanting false memories ... is the protracted imagining of events in the presence of authority figures who encourage belief in and confirm the authenticity of the pseudomemories.

Where abductions are recalled without hypnosis, the memories often come from dreams or nightmares. In a survey of over 150 abductees, Randle et al. found that many abductees have difficulty distinguishing between reality and dreams or fantasy. Through hypnosis, they are encouraged to believe that their vivid dreams are memories of actual experiences.

We all dream about the things we experience and think about during the day, and thinking about aliens and abductions in the daytime increases the likelihood of dreaming of them at night.

Randle et al. believe that about 50% of UFO abduction reports have their origin in sleep paralysis. This refers to the temporary inability to move or speak when awakening, and less commonly when falling asleep. It is sometimes accompanied by hallucinations (known as 'hypnagogic' when falling asleep, and 'hypnopompic' when waking up), such as sensing the presence of a threatening entity in the room or sitting on one's chest. It affects as many as 1 in 5 or 6 of the general population.

Abductions often contain dreamlike elements, including jarring discontinuities. Abductees frequently report being outside their body during certain stages of the event, or view themselves in the third person throughout.

They report very common dream imagery, such as floating or flying, falling endlessly, or appearing naked in a public place. Typically, the aliens appear, and then the experiencer is suddenly inside the UFO. Day instantly becomes night, the inside of a room or craft appears far larger than its exterior dimensions would allow (some see this as a sign of the aliens' advanced technology!), and events which subjectively seem to have taken hours are found to have taken minutes, or vice versa.

No photographs or films of an abduction have ever been made, despite the concerted efforts of some abductees to document their experiences on videotape. Videotaping in bedrooms where regular abductions supposedly occur has only delayed abductions, until people get tired of setting up the camera or the abductee sleeps somewhere else. Attempts by abductees to steal souvenirs while on the alien craft are usually unsuccessful, or if a souvenir is supposedly brought back it later can't be found.

These facts, too, point towards a psychological or psychic experience rather than a physical experience.

- 80% of abductees are women.
- Randle et al. found that a high percentage of abductees reported gender identity problems, dysfunctional families, and broken lives.
- As many as 90% of the abductees in their sample had some kind of sexual dysfunction, and their tales of rape and sexual activity on UFOs could be seen as evidence of these problems.
- Nearly all of them claimed that they were either sexually penetrated by an alien creature or forced to sexually penetrate one.

One female abductee said that, while lying immobile on an examination table, a 5-foot alien mounted her, looked deep into her eyes and said, 'What you need is a good fuck!' (The manners of this particular 'alien' bear a striking resemblance to those of a sexist male earthling!) The woman said that the alien then proceeded to give her 'the most profound orgasm of my life'. She also said that no abduction researcher has ever asked her about the sexual aspect of abduction, as they were only interested in genetic experiments.

Most of the male abductees interviewed by Randle et al. reported that a female alien mounted them, but they couldn't understand how they achieved an erection under the stressful circumstances (this probably points to a 'dream' experience). They all reported that the sex act was completed but without the pleasant sensation of orgasm.

Significantly, gray-type aliens are normally described as having no obvious sexual differences or genitalia. Yet when the time for alien sex arrives, female grays with breasts and a vagina appear, and male aliens conveniently sprout penises – and very human-looking ones, too, according to eyewitnesses! Clearly all is not as it seems in the weird world of alien abductions.

Newman and Baumeister draw parallels between UFO abduction accounts and the fantasies of sexual masochists. The main feature of masochism are pain, loss of control, and humiliation – three dominant themes in abduction stories. Victims are often strapped to an examining table, their rectums may be probed, and rape is frequent. But despite the painful, humiliating, and degrading experiences they have been subjected to, they often leave their captors with a sense of affection for them and sadness, feeling that they have had an extraordinary, transforming experience.

These authors say that such sentiments make sense if abduction narratives are viewed as being about the fulfillment of an intense desire to escape from ordinary self-awareness in demanding, individualistic societies – especially the US, where the vast majority of abductions are reported. Both masochists and abductees tend to come from higher socioeconomic classes and are mostly whites. Many abductees start reporting explicit masochistic fantasies after their abduction.

The similarities between the abduction experiences reported by different people is at first sight very impressive. However, the fact that people tell similar stories in similar ways is not conclusive evidence that the stories are true. An important factor behind similarities in abduction accounts is that researchers know what they expect to find and may subtly influence abductees through their questions and how they react to the answers.

Abductees could also be influenced by investigators telepathically – whether hypnosis is used or not. In a classic work on the communication theory of telepathy, psychiatrist Joost Meerloo explored the 'non-verbal conversation and communication between the unconscious minds of therapists and patient'. John Whitmore suggests that Jung's idea of a collective unconscious, a fund of ideas and imagery shared by all people, may help to explain the similar patterns that abduction researchers claim to find among their subjects.

Abduction researchers often claim that if abductions were purely imaginary we would expect to find

far greater variety in abduction accounts. It is important to realize that there is in fact far greater variety than most abductionists like to admit. Whitmore says that the numerous first-person accounts of abductions 'reveal a wealth of bizarre detail which is not wholly amenable to the neat theories of many ufologists'. Many abductions do not involve the well-defined phases described by abductionists, and many are not traumatic, do not involve short gray beings or medical examinations, or devices that look like spacecraft.

The literature contains references to a bewildering variety of beings. In addition to the grays, there are reports of beings with 'golden, strawlike hair', others that look like 'a combination of earth animals', 'creatures with wrinkled skin, crab-claw hands, and pointed ears', and a woman with 'long red hair and violet eyes'.

Jacobs, however, insists that the only genuine aliens are the grays, and that if other types of beings are reported, it may be because the grays have made abductees see illusions! This illustrates how selectively some abductionists deal with what is reported.

In multiple abduction cases, the alleged victims often have a close relationship of some sort with each other and have had a chance to talk about the incident and influence each other before any investigation takes place. However, in one case 2 witnesses, who had gone their separate ways after their abduction experience and had never discussed it, were hypnotized separately many years later and corroborated about 70% of each other's description of what happened. This need not mean they had an objective physical experience, as shared 'dreams' are not unknown.

If there really are alien abductors at large, it is curious that the vast majority of abduction reports come from the US, even though it makes up less than 5% of the earth's land surface. Although similar reports have been made in Great Britain, South America, and other parts of the world, they do not seem to have aroused as much fervour as in the US. Non-American abductees seem to have contact with a greater variety of entities than Americans, but such differences are often glossed over by those seeking to emphasize the similarities between different stories.

A major problem in assessing abduction accounts is that witnesses who seek out abduction researchers do not represent a cross-section of close-encounter observers. As Mack says, 'The population that comes to us ... is certainly self-selected'.

Jacques Vallee says that 'abductees',

have preselected themselves in seeking out sensational researchers whose books or television appearances had already provided a template for the witnesses' experiences. These artificial, preexisting patterns are reinforced under hypnosis, which is often performed under conditions of scandalous incompetence. And the resulting statistics draw from a data base where only the cases that fit the preferred model have been admitted. This is not science, it is a childish and indeed dangerous game, played on the real tragedy of witnesses' lives and fears.

He adds that the professionals he consulted considered it unethical for anyone who had already reached a strong personal conclusion about UFOs to interrogate a witness under hypnosis. Yet some abduction hypnotists now claim that they themselves have been abducted by aliens and have a 'mission' on their behalf!

Abductees often claim they find marks or scars on their bodies after an abduction. Since many people have blemishes on the skin, it's always possible that after a suspected abduction one or more of them is noticed for the first time. Most abduction researchers assume that physical injuries and

symptoms are the result of physical examinations by aliens.

However, it is well known that trauma on a subtle, mental level can bring about gross physical symptoms. For instance, there are cases in which devout Christians (mostly Catholic women) have developed bleeding wounds (stigmata) resembling those supposedly suffered by Christ during the crucifixion.

Stigmata usually appear suddenly during an ecstatic trance, and can disappear quickly without leaving any scars.



Left. Antonio Ruffini recieved the stigmata in 1951 after seeing a vision of the Virgin Mary.

Also, hypnotic suggestion can cause a pattern of reddened skin, such as a cross, to appear on the skin, and can cause physical symptoms, such as warts, to disappear.

A man who had a near-death experience in which a man touched him with very hot hands, felt a severe burning sensation in his left arm on returning to consciousness. This area developed the appearance of a boil and left a residual mark after healing. Similarly, a woman abductee who claimed under hypnosis that she was forced to undergo a physical examination, including a vaginal probe, later developed a life-threatening vaginal infection.

Other characteristics of abductions, according to some researchers, include the implantation and later removal of fetuses, and the presentation to women of their hybrid children.

These events are fairly recent developments found primarily in the works of researchers who are convinced that extraterrestrials are producing a hybrid race, and who may be influencing their subjects' testimonies. The medical documentation required to support the hypothesis of 'missing fetuses' is lacking. Moreover, many of the women making such claims are post-menopausal women and women who have had hysterectomies or are unable to bear children.

Like stigmata and other mind-generated bodily marks, false pregnancy could be a sign of the body's extraordinary responsiveness to mental images and intense desires.

It is interesting to note that themes of missing fetuses and fetal aliens have grown apace with the practice of abortion since the early 1970s. Some researchers suggest that 'the clinical experience and emotional pain of abortion have burrowed into the psyche to haunt a guilty society with alienated fantasies of the unborn'.

Many abductees claim that 'implants' were inserted into their bodies during their abduction. These are allegedly tiny metallic devices for tracking, controlling, or monitoring abductees. They are often hard nodules just under the skin, and it's possible the abductee simply hadn't noticed them before. Abductees often report nosebleeds, and believe that something has been shoved up their nasal passages. X-rays sometimes reveal objects, but usually do not. In one case x-rays showed something near a person's nose but it vanished before surgery to remove it could be arranged.

Some small 'implants' have, however, been removed from the body and analyzed by reputable independent laboratories and scientists, but in each case they have been found to be organic material or silvers of glass or other completely terrestrial material.

None of the 'implants' recovered to date appear to be high-tech devices. An intriguing sidelight on this phenomenon is provided by the 16th-century physician and alchemist Paracelsus, who said that nails, hair, needles, bristles, pieces of glass, and many other things had been removed from the bodies of some patients. This state of affairs sometimes continued for many weeks or months, without the physician knowing what to do. He said that these things were made to enter the patient's body by the power of the evil imagination of a sorcerer, or practitioner of black magic.

Whatever the reality status of each abduction experience, abductees tend to believe they have been specifically 'chosen' by the aliens. And though they often claim they wish the abductions would stop, each abduction reinforces their own perceived worth and strengthens their sense of self. By becoming an abductee, people can attribute their problems to an external cause and feel absolved of any responsibility. Those who feel unattractive and unwanted attempt to find anything that will bring them the attention they seek, even if that attention is negative. This explains why many abductees are eager for media attention. Many abductees join abduction support groups.

But whereas being a member of a support group used to be part of a healing process, it has now become a badge of identity, and recovery has become a lifelong process. Members who think about leaving the group are not seen as recovering but as defecting.

Support groups therefore play an important role in perpetuating the abduction mania.

9. Alien abductions - 2

The following cases show that abductions experiences can involve far more than pure fantasy.

The first reported alien abduction during the modern UFO era occurred in 1957 and involved a Brazilian law student named Antonio Villas-Boas. In the morning of 16 October while ploughing on his parents' ranch, he noticed an extremely bright red star overhead. As it approached it changed into an egg-shaped craft which landed on 3 telescoping legs.

His tractor engine died. He was then confronted by a short humanoid being, which he pushed away, causing it to stumble and fall. But 3 other humanoids grabbed him and he was carried on board the craft. The beings were 5 feet tall, wore tight-fitting siren-suits and helmets, and communicated with one another by making growling sounds. They stripped off his clothes and 'washed' him with an oily-looking liquid. Blood samples were taken from under his chin.

Left alone, Villas-Boas noticed a strange odour in the room and finally vomited. A naked woman

then entered. She was slim, with blue eyes, high cheekbones, a pointed chin, very pointed breasts, and bright red pubic hair. The woman began to caress him and he was surprised that he felt sexually aroused. They had sex twice, and the woman also took a sperm sample. Before she left, she pointed to her stomach and then to the sky. After getting dressed, Villas-Boas was taken to another room. He thought of stealing a box with a clocklike face as proof of his experience, but one of the beings immediately pushed him away. After a tour of the ship he climbed down a ladder to the ground and the craft took off. He had been on it for more than 4 hours.

Villas-Boas suffered from excessive sleepiness for about a month after the incident. An examination revealed 2 scars on either side of his chin. He was also found to have suffered radiation poisoning. At the time the case was too bizarre for anyone to accept as authentic, even though Villas-Boas was a sincere, intelligent young man, who eventually became an attorney. It is significant that he remembered the abduction consciously and that no hypnosis was used. The case set the tone for the abduction reports that would follow.

Just prior to the above incident, Villas-Boas had 2 other strange experiences. On 5 October 1957, he could not sleep because of the heat, opened the shutters of his house, and saw a bright, fluorescent light, which seemed to sweep up into the sky. Shortly afterwards he looked outside again. The light was still there and moved towards the window. He closed the shutters but the light bled through the slats and through the tiles of the roof, while he and his brother watched. On 14 October, he was ploughing a field with his brother late at night when they saw a bright light hovering in the sky. He tried to get close to it, but it kept moving away.

The famous abduction of Betty and Barney Hill on 19 September 1961 had several parallels with the Villas-Boas case, though the latter was not publicized until 1966. The Hills saw a UFO following their car on a lonely road in New Hampshire. Barney got out and saw figures inside. Terrified, he got back into the car and drove off at high speed. Shortly afterwards, the couple heard a series of electronic beeps and felt drowsy. Later they heard a second series of beeps and found that they were nearly home. It was only some time after the event that they realized the journey had taken 2 hours longer than it should have done.

Betty became obsessed with UFOs and began to have disturbing dreams, which she discussed with her husband. Her husband developed ulcers as a result of anxiety caused by his experience, and also developed warts around his groin; he later remembered an instrument being placed over his genitals on the UFO. Under hypnosis they recalled that after the first set of beeps Barney had inexplicably turned off the main road and stopped before a group of figures on the road. They were taken on board a landed craft and subjected to a medical examination.

Betty believed she had communicated with the alien leader telepathically. The couple agreed that the aliens were about 5 feet tall, with broad foreheads, but Betty remembered large noses and black hair, while Barney recalled no noses, just 2 slits for nostrils, and no hair. The hypnotist took the view that they were recounting a fantasy. It is worth noting that after the Hills' close encounter, they began to experience poltergeist phenomena in their home, and that Betty had a past history of paranormal experiences.

The following abduction occurred at Bebedouro, Minas Gerais, Brazil, in the afternoon of 4 May 1969. 24-year-old José Antonio da Silva, an enlisted soldier, was fishing on a lagoon when suddenly he heard voices, became aware of figures moving behind him, and felt a burst of light strike his leg.

He dropped his fishing rod and fell to his knees.

Two beings, about four feet tall, wearing aluminum suits and what appeared to be helmets, seized

him and dragged him to an object sitting on a dirt road. The object was shaped like an upright cylinder and had black platforms at each end. The soldier was taken inside, where the beings put one of their 'helmets' on him.

Da Silva felt the craft rise. The beings talked animatedly among themselves in a language he did not recognize. After a long period of travel, he felt a jarring that suggested their craft had landed. The soldier was then blindfolded and led to a large room, where they removed the wrap from his eyes.

A being stood in front of him who was extremely hairy and slightly taller than the rest. His waist-long hair was reddish and wavy. When the others took off their helmets, they were of similar appearance.

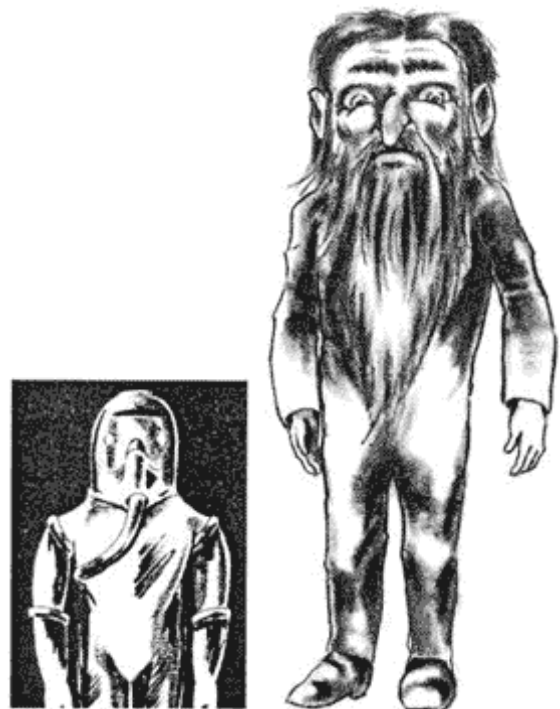
Da Silva watched as the beings, at one point more than a dozen, examined his fishing equipment and took one of every item he had in duplicate. Later the witness noticed on a low shelf the bodies of four human men, one black, and became terribly frightened. Later still, the beings gave him a dark green liquid to drink out of a cubical stone glass.

The dwarf leader then began a strange conversation with the soldier, mostly about weapons, which was conducted entirely with gestures and drawings. Da Silva also understood that they wanted him to help in their relations with humans. When the soldier refused, the dwarf snatched the crucifix from the rosary Da Silva always carried with him. As the soldier began praying, a Cristlike figure appeared to him, making revelations.

Shortly afterwards, Da Silva was blindfolded again and taken back to earth. As the craft landed, he felt he was being dragged and lost consciousness. He woke up alone near the town of Vitoria, about 200 miles from where he had been fishing. He was dehydrated and hungry, but drank from a stream and was able to catch some fish as he still had his rod with him. Only his identity card, which the aliens had examined, had disappeared. He had a swollen knee where the ray had struck him and three open wounds on his neck where the helmet had rubbed against his skin.

He had been away four and a half days.

Right. Alien encountered by Antonio da Silva,
May 1969 (courtesy of Harry Trumbore).



One of the central questions in this case is how Da Silva travelled the 200 miles from Bebedouro to Vitoria, and where his physical body was during his 4.5-day absence. If there had been witnesses and video equipment at both locations would they have observed him being taken aboard a craft, the craft taking off, the landing of the craft at the other location, and his emergence from it?

Most of the abduction could easily be a vision. Jacques Vallee points out the striking parallels between the man's experience and initiation ordeals. Initiation rituals are characterized by the following general scenes: the candidate is confronted by members of the occult group wearing a special costume; he is blindfolded, he is led by the arm along a rough and difficult route; he is taken into a specially designed chamber with no windows; he is brought into the presence of a 'master'; he is given a test and made to answer questions; he is shown a variety of symbols designed to remind him of death; the situation suggests he may not survive the ordeal; he is given ritual food or drink; he is blindfolded again and led outside.

All these elements are present in the case of Antonio da Silva.

On 25 October 1974, Carl Higdon, an oil-field driller, was hunting in a forest in the Wyoming countryside. He spotted 5 elk, raised his rifle and fired at one, but felt no kick from the high-powered weapon and heard no report. Absolute silence descended on the forest. The bullet seemed to float from the barrel and fell to the ground 50 feet in front of him. After retrieving the bullet, he heard a twig snap (a common feature in otherworldly encounters). He turned to see a bow-legged humanlike figure, about 6 feet 2 inches tall, standing near him.

His skin tone was like that of an Oriental, and the face seemed to blend into the neck. As in so many other cases, the being was dressed in a one-piece suit. His right arm ended in a cone-shaped device. The man, who later revealed that he was called 'Ausso', greeted him by saying, 'How you doin'?', and then asked if he was hungry. Before Higdon could answer, a small package floated toward him.

Inside were 4 pills, and he found himself taking one.



Left. Alien encountered by Carl Higdon, October 1974.

He then spotted the creature's ship in the distance, and was asked if he wanted to come along. Before he could answer he found himself inside a transparent cubical craft, strapped to a chair and wearing a helmet.

Ausso and another ufonaut were with him, and the 5 elk were crammed inside in a cage behind him. When Ausso pointed his arm at the controls, the craft began moving and Higdon saw the earth receding below him. Moments later they landed on a dark planet that Ausso said was '163,000 light-miles' (!) from earth. Outside was a huge tower with a bright rotating light, and he saw what looked like 5 humans standing in the nearby plaza. When Ausso pointed his arm again, Higdon found himself inside a room in the tower.

A device came out of the wall in front of him and examined him for several minutes. Ausso then told him he was not what they needed and would be taken back. Ausso returned his rifle and floated the remaining pills out of his pocket.

The next thing Higdon remembered was walking along a road, feeling dazed and confused. About 2.5 hours had passed. He still had his rifle, but didn't know who he was or where he was. In the distance he saw a parked truck and decided to use it for shelter, not realizing that it was his own vehicle. The truck stood in the middle of a mudhole, with no tracks to show how it had got there. He used the two-way radio to call for help and was eventually found. His truck had to be towed out, and those involved concluded it must have been deposited there from the air. He was taken to hospital, and late the next day he began to regain his memory and equilibrium.

The bullet Higdon had fired at the beginning of his adventure was examined by an expert, who could not explain the state it was in. The lead had disappeared, it showed none of the deformation expected of a spent bullet, and it looked as if it had been turned inside out. Much of Higdon's experience, however, sounds very dreamlike; some of the details were recalled with the help of hypnosis. Higdon passed a lie-detector test, and was considered to be a reliable character. Other people had seen lights in the sky on the night of the abduction.

Another incident very different from the modern standard abduction took place in Emilcin, Poland, on 10 May 1978. A 71-year-old farmer, Jan Wolski, was travelling on a horse-drawn wagon along a country road when he encountered 2 'freaks', as he called them. They had greenish faces, wore one-piece overalls ending in some kind of foot flipper, and walked by making supple jumps like divers on the seabed. Suddenly they got into his wagon on either side of him, but Wolski continued on his journey without saying anything. He thought they must be 'foreigners', since they had slanted eyes, prominent cheekbones, and spoke in an unknown language.

A short while later they came across a strange vehicle in a clearing, looking like 'a bus hovering in the air'. The humanoids signalled to Wolski to step onto a platform that was lowered from the object.

He did so, then rose up into a dark rectangular room where he met 2 more 'foreigners' who told him to remove his clothes. After a brief examination with 'two plates', he was told to get dressed. He galloped all the way home, then returned with his sons, and they found a series of trapezoidal, almost rectangular footprints. A 6-year-old boy who lived nearby said he had seen an aircraft resembling a bus fly very low over a barn, then climb vertically into the air and vanish.

This incident is regarded as a benchmark abduction account, with little or no contamination from the outside world and none of the media exposure that characterizes American abduction stories.

Another intriguing case took place on the evening of 3 January 1979. Americans Filiberto Cardenas, his friend Fernando Marti, and Marti's wife and 13-year-old daughter were driving home when their car engine quit. The 2 men got out and began to look under the hood. They suddenly saw alternating red and violet lights reflecting off the engine and heard a sound 'like many bees'.



Left. Jan Wolski.

Right. The craft encountered by Wolski, May 1978 (courtesy of Harry Trumbore). Not recommended for interstellar travel!



The car began to shake, the light turned a brilliant white, and Fernando began to crawl further under the hood for protection. Meanwhile, Filiberto felt paralyzed and began to rise into the air, shouting 'Don't take me'. Fernando saw him rising up, and by the time he got out from under the hood, all he could see was a bulky object that ascended and moved away. The next thing Filiberto remembered was being nearly run over by a car on the Tamiami Trail about 16 kilometers from where he had been lifted up.

The police were sufficiently puzzled by the story that they listed the type of offence as 'close encounter of the third kind' in their official report.

Under hypnosis, Filiberto said he had been given an examination that left numerous marks on his body. A caped, human-looking figure then spoke to him at length, both telepathically and in perfect Spanish, and showed him many remarkable scenes displayed on the walls. Filiberto then remembered being taken to an undersea base.

He was again paralyzed and examined, and a sperm sample was taken. Afterwards, another caped, enthroned figure gave him instructions illustrated with images on banks of TVs. After many similar experiences that seemed to go on for many days, he was dropped off near Tamiami Trail after a lapse of about 2 hours.

Richard Thompson comments:

'It is possible ... that Filiberto Cardenas was actually carried off into the sky as Marti testified. But the experiences he related under hypnosis may have been partially generated by his own mind. Or they may have been projected into his mind by the agency that carried him off'.

There was a second meeting with the aliens, when Filiberto and his wife voluntarily walked up a ramp into the alien ship and had a friendly conversation with its nearly human occupants. They were subsequently able to remember this experience without hypnosis, but there were no independent witnesses to confirm its objectivity.

The following multiwitness case took place on 17 November 1971. At 9:30 PM, a Brazilian named Paulo Gaetano was driving his car, accompanied by another man, Elvio B. As they passed the town of Bananeiras, Paulo felt the car was not pulling normally, and he mentioned this to his companion, who reacted by saying he was tired and wanted to sleep. The engine stalled and Paulo had to stop the car on the side of the road. He then saw an object about 12 feet away.

A red beam of light was projected at the car and seemed to cause the door to open. Several small

beings appeared, took Paulo into the craft, and made him lie down on a small table. After fastening his arms, they lowered from the ceiling an apparatus resembling an x-ray machine. He felt a cut near his elbow, and the beings collected his blood. (Investigators from a UFO research group photographed the wound 3 days later.) Then he was shown 2 panels, one of them a plan of the town of Itaperuna, the other a picture of an atomic explosion. Paulo felt heavy.

He remembers being helped by Elvio, but does not recall how they got home.

Elvio's story, however, is very different. He reported that near Bananeiras, Paulo had begun to show signs of nervousness, saying there was a flying saucer following them, when in fact it was only a bus. Elvio added that the car had slowed down and stopped, and that he had come to Paulo's assistance after he had fallen to the ground behind the car, with the door on the driver's side remaining open.

Elvio managed to get Paulo on his feet and started with him by bus towards Itaperuna, where Paulo was examined by the first-aid station. The police sent a patrol to the site and found Paulo's car on the highway. Elvio was unable to explain what had happened to Paulo and why the door was open. He did not remember when Paulo had got out, and could not explain why they had taken the bus. The police found no trace on the car that could explain the wound on Paulo's arm.

Vallee comments that some experiments with microwaves suggest it is becoming technically feasible for sensory impressions to be projected into people's minds at a distance. He asks:

'Is this part of the technology that is involved in the UFO phenomenon? ... [Are] we dealing with a technology that systematically confuses the witnesses?'

Another possibility is that instead of the mind being influenced by means of advanced psychotronic devices acting on the physical brain, the mind could be affected directly on the astral level without the use of any physical technology.

The above accounts show that some abductions seem to have a physical component. There is certainly a great deal of evidence that UFOs can manifest physically and leave physical traces. In some cases people may have been physically taken on board these vehicles, and there are a few abduction cases in which the abductee was apparently dropped off miles from the pickup point. If humans are occasionally taken on board materialized craft, then a physical medical examination is not inconceivable, though it may only be a simulated one, conducted by paranormal entities rather than by extraterrestrial scientists. However, many aspects of abduction experiences sound like visions or dreams.

Abduction cases with definite physical elements seem to be rare compared with the numerous cases where there is no hard evidence of anything extraordinary, only events remembered mainly under hypnosis. In these cases the entire experience could be taking place on the mental plane, and reflect a variety of influences. Some of these cases could be generated during the hypnosis session itself, while others may originate in an actual unusual experience.

Popular culture has had a major influence on abduction accounts. From the beginning of the 20th century, films, books, etc. have often presented stories about alien spacecraft, big-eyed aliens, and abductions, including medical examinations, implants, scars, memory blocks, and missing time.

Several elements of the Hills' abduction tale, for example, seem to be derived from the movies *Invaders from Mars* and *Killers from Space*, an episode of the television programme *The Outer Limits*, and a book by Donald Keyhoe entitled *The Flying Saucer Conspiracy* that Betty had read

just after her strange experience. The vast increase in media attention for abductions in the past couple of decades means that no abduction stories are likely to be entirely uncontaminated by cultural influences.

The abduction motifs that first emerged in the Villas-Boas and Hill cases could therefore have originated partly from cultural influences and partly from the witnesses' imaginations. But this is unlikely to be the whole story. For the motifs that find their way into popular culture and into our own minds are themselves largely drawn from the 'memory of nature', the 'collective unconscious' or, in occult terminology, the astral world -- the thought-atmosphere in which our minds are constantly immersed.

That something more than individual imagination is involved is underlined by the fact that during the 1960s, even before the Villas-Boas and Hill cases were publicized, John Keel had collected many other reports by people who had cloudy memories of having been stopped on lonely highways and taken into some kind of a structure (not always a flying saucer), where they were medically examined.

Keith Thomson suggests that 'perhaps something quite ancient from the world soul was making its periodic return, in a novel form, as part of a larger cycle or spiral of manifestation'. Abductions are, after all, a recurrent theme in mythology and folklore.

Some abductions begin with a sighting of something strange, often a bright light, which helps to trigger further experiences that do not take place in our physical reality. It seems that the more people who report abductions and the more publicity they receive, the greater the chance of other people tapping into the same nexus of 'archetypal' themes and images, especially when in trance or under hypnosis.

This may also happen during the transition between waking and sleeping and during dreams -- for even dreams are not simply products of our brains. The brain is an extension of the mind, which operates on different levels of the astral plane, and is part of the collective mind of Gaia.

Comparing abductions to visions, apparitions, and hallucinations does not therefore mean that they are generated solely in our own heads. In one close encounter, a woman remembered leaving her bed one night and joining a male friend, and they walked across the fields to a waiting aircraft, which then took off.

The woman was taken to a huge mother ship and shown round. The next day her friend reported an identical experience, describing walking with her across the fields to the aircraft, and corroborating every detail on the plane till they parted company, when the man remembered going to a planet with golden cities on it.

Victoria LePage writes:

Many researchers now deem it highly probable that UFO witnesses, especially those involved in close encounters and abductions, are reporting events that have a genuinely objective basis but which are perceived imaginally, as dreams are, through the lens of a subjective and entranced consciousness, and in terms that are according to their own unconscious prejudices, expectations, neuroses and level of intellectual or psychospiritual development.

The subtle, mental body may undergo a purely visionary abduction experience based on a series of standard archetypal elements. And some experiences could involve astral travel, i.e. the temporary

separation of the subtle mind from the physical and astral bodies.

Both types of experience may be influenced by external agencies, as the astral world is inhabited by various kinds of beings, both high and low. In rare cases visionary or out-of-body experiences might begin after the witness has been taken on board a physically materialized craft.

However, as Michael Talbot says, most medical examinations are probably only a symbolic representation of the probing of the subtle anatomy of our 'energy selves' or souls. Only an advanced adept could unravel all the various physical, astral, and mental factors involved in any particular abduction experience.

The astral 'model body' or 'design body' ('linga-sharira' in Sanskrit) is said to be able to travel no more than a few meters from the physical body. However our consciousness can be transferred to a higher astral form or subtle body (sometimes called the 'mayavi-rupa', or 'illusory form') that can travel far from the physical and astral bodies, either spontaneously or intentionally.

Michael Grosso says that 'there is such an admixture of mythic and psychic elements, it is hard to take UFO narratives at face value'. And John Whitmore comments:

'[The] patterns alleged to have been discovered by abduction investigators often have religious overtones or similarities with more traditional types of religious experience. In addition, the abduction experience is often given a religious meaning by the percipient, and these interpretations are habitually overlooked or ignored by the UFO investigator'.

Jacques Vallee, too, stresses that abduction stories should not automatically be taken literally:

At close range, UFO phenomena act as a reality transformer ..., triggering for the witness a series of symbolic displays that are indistinguishable from reality. These displays, which frequently begin with a bewildering series of blinking colored lights of extraordinary intensity, induce a state of intense confusion for the subjects who are vulnerable to the insertion of new thoughts and new visual experiences.

The response of the ufologists to the confusion of the abductees has been disastrous. By taking the symbolic displays at face value, and by hypnotizing the witnesses in an effort to dispel their confusion, many well-meaning researchers have actually reinforced the alternative reality induced by the UFO sighting, thus exacerbating what may be a spurious side effect and losing sight of the main experience. ...

[T]he symbolic display seen by the abductees is identical to the type of initiation ritual or astral voyage that is embedded in the traditions of every culture. In that sense, the UFO experience is a very real trigger that releases powerful imagery we are all carrying in our 'collective unconscious' ...

In one case, a woman awoke in bed to see a helicopter over her house as if the intervening ceiling and roof had disappeared. She also saw 2 unusual humanoid beings at the foot of the bed. Fortunately 2 friends were able to witness this scene: they saw a blue sphere of light around her (as she did) with brighter lights shooting through it, but they heard no helicopter and saw no beings. The blue light apparently created a virtual-reality scenario.

Kenneth Ring says that abduction experiences can be regarded as a variation of the archetypal initiatory journey, with its familiar sequence of separation, ordeal, and return.

The separation stage is the abduction, with the individual usually being spirited away against his or

her will. The ordeal takes the form of the medical examination, which can be compared to the dismemberment motifs in traditional shamanic initiations. Among the Buryat of Siberia, the shamanic apprentice is taken away by his ancestors, and then tormented by the Saajtani, who poke around his belly with knives, cutting whole chunks of flesh off him, and throwing them about. The 'spirits' cook his flesh to 'ripen' it, and the initiate acquires his inner knowledge during this procedure.

After being examined, abductees, like shamans, may receive teachings, instructions, or revelations. Finally they return to their normal surroundings. They frequently suffer feelings of confusion, disorientation, time loss, and memory impairment, but there is often a sense that something extraordinary has happened that will leave a lasting imprint.

Ring argues that, like near-death experiences, which are another variant of the initiatory journey, abductions take place in an alternate reality -- the 'imaginal realm'.

There are often significant surface differences between UFO encounters, angelic visitations, shamanic journeys, and near-death experiences. Yet, as Keith Thompson says,

in all of these realms we find archetypal images of initiation involving otherworldly journeys amid extraordinary -- and apparently autonomous -- beings. Many ufologists, seeking to keep their precious field of study unique and discrete, question such parallels because, they say, there is no evidence that the beings described in non-UFO reports are 'from the same place' as UFO beings. What they seldom point out is that there is no evidence, either, of where 'UFO beings' are from!

[I]t requires an act of will not to notice thematic parallels between ceremonies of dismemberment undergone by shamanic initiates inside traditional round initiation huts, on the one hand, and the invisible 'medical' procedures experienced by UFO initiates inside rounded operating theatres inside disk- or oval-shaped craft, on the other.

Paul Devereux mentions the intriguing work going on with DMT, the most hallucinogenic substance known. It is produced naturally in the human brain and occurs in psychedelic plants that have been used by shamanic peoples from time immemorial. For years people who have used this substance have reported rather similar experiences, such as encountering alien intelligences.

Also noteworthy are the experiences of a man who has experimented with trying to enter the lucid dream state directly from the waking state. He reported that, deep into the extreme relaxation and concentration required, he is interrupted by the tangible experience of being 'examined in the dark by robots' or being 'operated on by small beings'.

Some researchers suggest that the 'aliens' are reflections of ourselves -- alien-ated, dis-eased with ourselves and one another, and with the dis-spirited, impersonal, and uncontrollable society we live in. In a similar vein, Michael Grosso interprets abductions as symbolic evidence for disturbances in the collective unconscious.

Visions of unhealthy-looking beings (the grays), who sometimes claim to come from a dying planet, who examine captives and take genetic material to create a hybrid species mean 'we are the sick ones, and ... we, as a species living on planet Earth, are in need of regeneration'. The fetal appearance of these beings suggests the child, the continuity of human life. According to Grosso, 'The "new man," the future of the species, is in great danger -- our future is threatened with extinction. ...

If we learn to cooperate with the forces of rebirth, we may yet rise from the "examination table,"

resuscitated from our planetary near-death experience'.

10. Mythology and astral visitations

References to human interaction with:

- gods
- angels
- demons
- elves
- sylphs
- fairies
- leprechauns
- ghosts
- trolls
- monstrous animals

and other nonhuman and otherworldly entities can be found throughout the world's religious, mythic, and folkloric traditions.

Some of these entities were believed to kidnap people and subject them to stressful and surreal ordeals. 'Aliens' seem to be part of this spectrum of paranormal beings.

Right. An early painting of a woman being abducted by a mythical satyr (courtesy of Keven Randle).



Some materialistic writers have argued that the 'gods' of old were really 'ancient astronauts'. There are certainly several accounts in religious writings that could be interpreted along UFO lines, though they need not involve extraterrestrials. The biblical Book of Ezekiel, for example, opens with Ezekiel's description of how in 593 BC, on the banks of the Chebar River in Chaldea,

'a stormy wind came out of the north, and a great cloud, with brightness round about it, and fire flashing forth continually'.

In its midst he saw 'the likeness of four living creatures'; each had a human form but with 4 wings and 4 faces (those of a man, a lion, an ox, and an eagle). In the midst of the creatures was 'something that looked like burning coals of fire'. Beside the creatures he saw four wheels on the ground, each being 'a wheel within a wheel', and above the creatures he saw 'the likeness of a firmament, shining like crystal'. Above it was 'the likeness of a throne', above which was seated a human form surrounded by brightness. Ezekiel fell on his face before 'the glory of the Lord', and then heard a voice speaking to him.

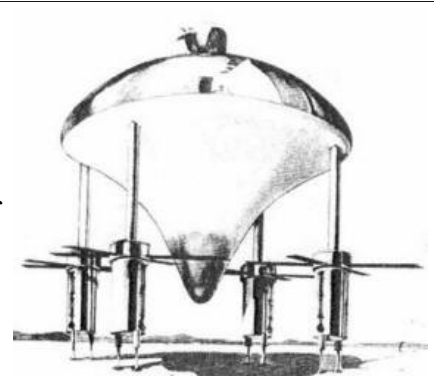
He subsequently had several similar experiences, and described how the 'spirit' had lifted him up and taken him to other places. Some people today believe Ezekiel encountered a space vehicle piloted by extraterrestrials, while others believe he had a vision.

In the light of modern close encounters his experience could have been partly physical and partly visionary.



Left. The vision of Ezekiel, as interpreted by Raphael (1518).

Right. The spaceship encountered by Ezekiel, as interpreted by engineer Josef Blumrich (1974).



Vedic literature contains many accounts of encounters between humans and other humanoid races, including interbreeding and abductions. The beings are sometimes benevolent and sometimes malevolent, and often come from other worlds. It also contains references to flying cities, flying horse-drawn chariots, and various types of aerial craft, some of which could vanish abruptly.

In evaluating religious and mythological stories it is of course crucial to bear in mind that not everything is meant to be taken literally. The narratives may combine descriptions of actual events and experiences with allegory, symbolism, and pure fantasy. Some genuine encounters with unusual beings and other 'alien' manifestations may take place on the physical level and others on the mental level.

As already shown, the extraterrestrial hypothesis is of little use in explaining such phenomena as it fails to account for the varied appearances and often strange and paranormal behaviour of the beings in question.

The modern UFO phenomenon seems to be essentially a space-age version of the long-standing interaction between humans and the denizens of the psychic world. As Jacques Vallee says, we seem to be confronted with the reappearance of an occult current, coloured with 'our new human biases, our preoccupation with science, our longing for the promised land of other planets'.

Witnesses interpret encounters with otherworldly phenomena according to their cultural and

personal preconceptions. For example, an African man saw silver-suited figures and a ball of red light and thought they might be the spirits of his ancestors. The Hawaiians claim to have observed UFOs for a thousand years, in many colours and shapes, including balls of fire, cones, and discs; they call them *akualele*, or 'flying spirits'. During periods of UFO sightings elsewhere in the American Southwest, Hopi Indians have observed blue star *kachinas* ('spirits') in the night air above the mesas.

In the West, with its pervasive science-fiction imagery, many people who experience strange luminosities or think they have seen strange beings automatically assume they have had an extraterrestrial experience. Those who turn to ufologists for help do so because they believe their experiences can be explained by extraterrestrial visits.

But some people may believe they have experienced a oneness with the Divine, made contact with their own higher selves, had an inner revelation or, alternatively, had an encounter with demonic beings. Some Christian fundamentalists see UFOs as demonic, while others suspect they might be angels. If all the evidence is considered, they can be seen as sometimes the one and sometimes the other -- including everything in between!

In the Middle Ages there were numerous reports of demonic possession and sexual exploits with male and female demons (*incubi* and *succubi*). Beginning in 1230 with the establishment of the Inquisition, stories of demonic possession and witchcraft would cause misery and death for tens of thousands of people for the next several hundred years.

The 15th-century work *Malleus Maleficarum* (The Witch's Hammer) set out several criteria for possession that bear a striking resemblance to modern descriptions of alien abduction. People possessed by demons were allegedly able to float through the air, communicate telepathically, and had knowledge of future events and enhanced intellectual abilities.

Witches were said to be able to pass through solid doors and walls, to fly, to steal and eat babies, to disguise themselves by taking on the shapes of other beings, and to engage in sexual orgies. Thus similar themes existed then as now, and rather than being purely imaginative inventions they could be derived in part from actual physical or astral experiences.

The 'medical examination' to which abductees frequently claim to have been subjected is reminiscent of the medieval tales of encounters with demons. Betty Hill was the first abductee in modern times who reported that a long needle was inserted into her navel and caused her pain.

But it is interesting to note that in a 15th-century French calendar showing the tortures inflicted by demons on people they have taken, the demons are depicted piercing their victims' abdomens with long needles.



Left. A 15th -century representation of demons inflicting tortures. From the *Kalendrier des Bergiers* (courtesy of Jacques Vallee).

Priests and nuns sometimes claimed they had been seduced by succubi and incubi respectively. Although they often awakened only after the demons were gone, nocturnal ejaculations were seen as physical evidence that the demons were collecting sperm for interbreeding purposes.

Nuns began to claim they had been raped in the night by incubi and injected with sperm collected by the demons.

Once such tales became popularized, many townspeople began to have similar experiences, with certain events occurring in a specific order. As time passed, the act of having sex with demons came to be seen as a definite sign of witchcraft. Women claiming this experience were arrested and their bodies examined for any scars or marks that would indicate the presence of their demonic lovers.

Some of them were then executed.

Right. An incubus straddling the chest of a sleeping victim (courtesy of Kevin Randle).



Clearly, nocturnal emissions alone hardly amount to evidence of sex with demons! In some cases, tales about incubi and succubi may well have been rationalizations of forbidden sexual impulses arising from enforced celibacy. But this does not explain everything. Many countries have traditions of similar attacks, sometimes called 'old hag' attacks, which are characterized by paralysis and a feeling that someone is pressing down on the sleeping person.

Nowadays, such experiences are simply attributed to 'sleep paralysis', but giving a phenomenon a scientific-sounding label is not the same as explaining it. It may be that during the transition between waking and sleeping, people are more susceptible to receiving impressions from the inner self or other astral entities, of a high or low nature. Some of the descriptions of 'demonic' attacks, past and present, suggest that sexual interaction with ethereal entities is quite possible, and sometimes these entities can assume a visible or tangible form.

'Spirit' materializations were commonly reported during the heyday of spiritualism in the late 19th century, and sexual contact with these entities was sometimes claimed as well. H.P. Blavatsky accepted that this really did happen, saying:

'If there are "Spirits" capable of drinking tea and wine, of eating apples and cakes, of kissing and touching the visitors of séance-rooms, all of which facts have been proven as well as the existence of those visitors themselves -- why should not those same Spirits perform matrimonial duties as well?'

She added that there is a 'ghastly connection' between the 'spirit' husbands and wives of mediums and the fauns, satyrs, incubi, succubi, sylphs, nymphs, and 'elementaries' reported by medieval mystics and kabalists.

According to Blavatsky and her adept teachers, succubi and incubi were often the astral corpses or shells of discarnate humans, but had nothing to do with the higher human soul. In particular, the astral souls of humans of a particularly lustful and malicious nature (known as 'elementaries') may be conscious after death, especially if their lives have been cut short. Largely devoid of reason, they follow their animal instincts and try to cling to material life by vampirizing the living.

Such 'demons' can become tangible and visible by attracting matter from the surrounding atmosphere, from the body of the victim if the latter is a medium, or from any other person in whom there is little cohesion of the lower elements, possibly as a result of some disease. Ethereal attackers can also be generated by the victim's own intense imagination, or they may be sorcerers or black magicians who have the power of projecting their astral forms.

Franz Hartmann relates a case in which a young man killed himself after a married woman had rebuffed his passionate advances. After his death, his astral form became attracted to her, and as she was of a mediumistic temperament, he found the necessary conditions to become partly materialized. It required a long-continued effort of her will and a course of treatment before she finally managed to rid herself of the incubus.

Evans Wentz heard of a case involving a man who was in love with a 'fairy woman' who visited him every night. Finally he became so worn out that he began to fear her. To escape, he emigrated to America, but she continued to haunt him there.

During the summer of 1975, a single mother living with her 4 children in a dilapidated house reported a plague of ghostly manifestations. Most involved a semisolid, 6-ft-tall apparition.

The mother and her eldest son also reported seeing 2 dark solid figures with oriental faces in the bedroom, at times struggling with one another. In addition, the mother claimed that on several occasions she was sexually assaulted by 3 semivisible beings who left large black-and-blue marks on her body.

Long before metallic spacecraft and their occupants arrived on the scene, small humanoid beings from the otherworld were enshrined in folklore and mythology. Such creatures are in fact nearly universal, with the various types of fairies being among the best known.

Jacques Vallee says that most of the entities encountered in early UFO sightings during the last half century fall into 2 main groups:

1. small, dark, hairy beings with small, bright eyes and deep, rugged, 'old' voices, who resemble the medieval gnomes,
2. beings with human complexions, oversized heads, and silvery voices, who resemble the sylphs of the Middle Ages or the elves of the fairy-faith.

These types have since been largely displaced by the widely publicized grays.

Although fairies are generally thought of as small creatures, some were reportedly as tall as humans or even taller. Some were said to have beautiful human forms, others to be ugly. In Ireland, they were also referred to as the 'good people' or 'little people'. Such beings were often seen playing, dancing, singing, making music, floating or flying through the air, and engaging in battles, hunts, and food gathering.

There are stories of them stealing or borrowing things from humans, especially food, helping with

domestic chores, entering into bargains, deceiving or attacking travellers, and guarding or revealing treasures. As in some modern alien encounters, they were sometimes seen pailing water from streams and wells. There are also stories of them threatening, pinching, beating, paralyzing, blinding, and even killing human witnesses.

In other stories they would place humans in trances, play pranks, and then flee, climb to a cloud, or simply vanish. Physical evidence, such as footprints, was sometimes reported in connection with such incidents.

It is impossible to say for certain to what extent any particular fairy story is factual or fictional, or involved a physical, psychic, or mental experience. Interestingly, the word 'fairy' comes from *fairie*, meaning a state of enchantment. Fairies were usually regarded as nonhuman nature-spirits (elementals), or as the 'spirits' of the dead (decaying astral shells or corpses of discarnate humans, rather than genuine human souls). Sometimes they were regarded as fallen angelic beings who had been exiled from heaven. They were considered to have ethereal bodies that were normally invisible, though perceptible by clairvoyants.

Fairies were said to live underground (e.g. in hollow hills), undersea, in the sky, or in an invisible world, where time ran at a different rate. They are described as mischievous, capricious, sometimes irritable, but not wicked. It was believed that they could change form according to their whim or the mind that sees them, and could appear or disappear suddenly.

Like modern aliens, they often worked at night, and showed great interest in reproductive matters: they allegedly seduced humans and gave birth to their offspring. There are numerous accounts of abductions by fairies. Many people claimed to have been kidnapped and taken to their underground palaces. Some men returned with bizarre tales of having been forced to mate with the fairy queen. The fairies would also kidnap females, especially pregnant women or young mothers, and steal healthy children, sometimes substituting a child of their own, known as a 'changeling'.

This belief is found not only in Europe but also in China and the American Pacific.

It seems unlikely that fairies literally bred with humans or swapped their own children for human children! During his first-hand study of fairylore in the early 20th century, Evans Wentz was shown several contemporary 'changelings'. He concluded that many changelings were so called merely because of some bodily deformity or because of some abnormal mental or pathological characteristics capable of ordinary rational explanation, but that other cases involving a change of personality were often best explained by possession.

Stories about manifestations of small humanlike creatures -- sometimes associated with UFOs -- are found today among various cultures. The Tzeltal Indians of Mexico, for example, have legends about 3-ft-tall, hairy, black humanoids called *ikals*, who live in caves and whom the natives frequently encounter. ('Ikal' means 'black' in Tzeltal, but 'spirit' in the Mayan language.) They are sometimes associated with strange lights in the sky. *Ikals* are said to fly, attack people, and, in the modern reports, carry a kind of rocket on their backs and kidnap Indians. Occasionally people have been paralyzed when they came upon the *ikals*.

In June 1982, a 12-year-old Malaysian girl was going to the river to wash some clothes when she encountered a strange female being of her own size who invited her to see another land. She felt no fear and found herself in a beautiful place where time seemed to whiz by. 2 days later, she was discovered lying unconscious on the ground by relatives who had been frantically searching the area the whole time. Malaysian tradition assigns the strange female to a group of beings called *Bunians*, who are known for abducting children. They are not associated with UFOs.

The fairies of old were known for their mischievous pranks, and virtually every ancient culture had legends about a Trickster figure. One variety is the viscera-sucker of the Philippines. This creature flies about at night, extracting the organs, body fluids, and fetuses of its victims by means of its long, thin, razor-sharp tongue. (Fetus extraction has also been reported in some modern cases of cattle mutilation.)

In American Indian folklore, Trickster is an essentially formless entity, usually called Coyote, Raven, or Hare, which plays all sorts of tricks on other animals and on humans. He is often involved in animal and human mutilations -- decapitating, skinning, and eviscerating his victims. He is even described as coring out the anus of animals -- a staple feature of cattle mutilation reports.

Keith Thompson says that,

'Given the protean thematic richness of the UFO epic, we should not be surprised to find that the continuum of alien encounters runs from uplifting contactéé accounts, at one end, to terrifying abduction chronicles, at the other'.

The contactéés are rather like modern prophets; some of them had face-to-face meetings with benign beings in a remote spot, sometimes even in the desert, while a saucer hovered nearby, whereas others received messages telepathically.

The messages tended to be high in ethical and prophetic content, with appeals for humans to change their ways before the coming apocalypse. Many contactéés emerged with heightened psychic abilities and spiritual awareness, only to face harassment, ridicule, and scorn from 'nonbelievers'. Some of the more famous 1950s contactéés ended up feeling betrayed by the space brothers when their prophecies failed to be fulfilled.

Several contactéés founded cults after their encounters. Similarly, Joseph Smith founded the Mormon Church in the 19th century on the strength of angelic visions. He described how he saw a pillar of very bright light over his head, which descended upon him. Next he saw 2 personages, 'whose brightness and glory defy all descriptions', standing above him in the air; one of them then spoke to him.

In the 6th century AD, an Arabian man called Mohammed had a vision of the Angel Gabriel 'in the likeness of a man, standing in the sky above the horizon'. He was ordered to become a prophet, and over a number of years he would periodically go into trance and dictate messages, which were later compiled to form the Koran.

As Keith Thompson notes,

'Just as contactéé encounters are rich with prophetic undertones and images of ascent to worlds in space, abductéé encounters feature striking echoes of mythological journeys to the world below, the underworld, the realm of the dead and the dispossessed, the infernal regions of the collective soul'.

Abductees speak of being confined in quarters usually termed dank, oppressive, and dimly lit. The landed 'saucer' becomes a scene of traditional underworld torments, a prison of suffering inflicted by primeval demons. Both contactéés and abductees often report finding their encounter experience transformative, along the lines of a cosmic rite of passage. And while the space brothers, with their handsome human forms, are akin to angels of light, the sinister 'men in black' correspond to angels of darkness.

It appears that the elemental and psychic energies of the astral world can manifest in all manner of different forms, mimicking the moral traits of human beings, ranging from benign to barbaric. In the theosophic tradition, the astral world or astral light is said to comprise several spheres of increasingly ethereal, more plastic matter surrounding and interpenetrating the physical earth.

Its higher reaches merge into the akashic or spiritual realms. The astral light is sometimes called 'nature's picture gallery', as it contains a record of everything that has ever happened on earth, both in the present evolutionary cycle and in past cycles. Since it records thoughts, emotions, and deeds of every conceivable quality, it comprises everything from the collective 'unconscious' to the collective superconscious.

The astral world is populated, among other things, by all manner of shape-shifting entities, known by the generic terms 'elementals', 'nature-forces', or 'nature-sprites'. Medieval alchemists and mystics divided them into 4 classes, according to the element they inhabited: gnomes (earth), undines (water), sylphs (air), and salamanders (fire).

In theosophy, 3 kingdoms of elementals are generally distinguished, which are placed below the mineral kingdom. This means that the consciousness-centers (or monads) manifesting as elementals are in the earliest stages of their evolutionary growth, and still have to pass through the other kingdoms of nature: i.e. the mineral, vegetable, animal, human, and 3 superhuman (or dhyani-chohonic) kingdoms. From another standpoint, there are 7 kingdoms of elementals, as there are elementals associated with each subplane (or cosmic element), in increasing grades of ethereality or spirituality.

Elementals are the semi-automatic, quasi-conscious agents and building stones of nature. They are involved in everything that happens on the physical plane, since every physical atom is ensouled by an elemental. While some elementals are atomic in size, others are gigantic, with corresponding powers. Although they do not possess self-consciousness, conscience, or free will, those associated with the higher subplanes can display a degree of intelligence. Most elementals have no permanent form of their own, and can change shape with great rapidity.

They adopt shapes (and also clothing) that mirror the pictures and thought-forms existing in their environment, including human minds. The higher elementals may take the form of beasts, either living or extinct, and those on the mental plane tend to assume a more or less human shape. Some elementals are said to be hostile towards humans, and others friendly. The elementals of the air are the most dangerous, because of their close connection with the desire part of the human constitution.

Other beings inhabiting the astral realms are humans who have attained a high degree of occult power and who are able to live or operate self-consciously in the astral world after leaving their physical body behind, either temporarily or permanently. These may be humans of mahatmic stature, or their evil counterparts, the sorcerers, black magicians, or 'brothers of the shadow'. Superhuman entities associated with the 3 highest kingdoms of nature inhabit the higher astral or akashic realms.

Some physical manifestations of ethereal entities may be spontaneous and instinctual, while others could be orchestrated by higher intelligences possessing the necessary powers. The earth is also subject to influences from other planets and solar systems and some of these could at times be involved in UFO manifestations. Only an advanced adept could speak with certainty on such matters.

Aliens and UFOs therefore appear to be part of a broad spectrum of otherworldly phenomena that

intrude into our own reality from the astral plane or 'twilight zone'. Materializations of 'spirits' were commonplace at spiritualist séances in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

During such phenomena, the medium and other sitters are often 'vampirized' to some extent by the astral entities involved; the elements required for the materialization are drawn from their bodies, depleting their vitality. In alien encounters, too, less-developed astral entities -- whether they manifest physically or not -- may feed off the emanations of witnesses, including intense emotions of fear and pain, especially if the witnesses are at all mediumistic.

Certain areas seem to attract a disproportionate amount of UFO activity. Moreover, during periods of intense UFO activity, an upsurge in other strange phenomena is often reported in the same areas, and sometimes by the same witnesses: e.g. falls of odd substances from the air, sightings of monsters and apparitions, and poltergeist activity. In such areas geomagnetic and electromagnetic conditions may be more conducive to astral manifestations.

It is significant that more UFO sightings occur during periods of intense magnetic activity and in areas characterized by magnetic disturbances and anomalies. Many sightings also occur around reservoirs, lakes and rivers (water being a concentrated form of etheric energy).

There may be various factors at work which cause astral visitations to become easier or more difficult at periodic intervals.

11. Conclusion

Sightings of unidentified flying objects and encounters with alien beings are not a completely new phenomenon that began in the mid-20th century. They are a part of a spectrum of unusual sightings and encounters that have been taking place since time immemorial.

The majority of UFOs are unexplained lightforms that often seem to be living, conscious entities. Most of them probably emerge into visibility from the ethereal realms interpenetrating our physical world, and are able to change their shape, size, and density.

There are also sightings of apparently structured craft that behave at times like solid physical objects, but are also capable of suddenly appearing, disappearing, and changing shape. The possibility that genuine extraterrestrials who have evolved on other physical planets or even on nonphysical planets are visiting earth cannot be ruled out.

However, the incredible diversity of entities and their often weird and eccentric behavior suggest that the majority are temporary manifestations of shape-shifting elemental entities, moulded by pictures in the earth's thought-atmosphere. Their craft, too, may be temporary manifestations modeled on astral images rather than the product of a technology that has evolved on some other planet.

While some people report strange encounters with 'aliens', others report encounters with all sorts of monsters or other religious, mythic, and legendary beings, some of which are seen in conjunction with bright lights or aerial 'craft'. No one would claim that all these entities come from other planets. In fact most ufologists prefer to ignore such accounts and their parallels with UFO encounters so that they can continue to propagate the modern, space-age myth of extraterrestrial

visitations.

While close encounters often include definite physical phenomena, other aspects are more like visionary experiences. Many abduction reports seem to be at least partly generated by, and certainly distorted by, the use of hypnosis. But there is little doubt that many people have had genuine strange experiences in which they enter an altered state of consciousness and see visions that incorporate patterns of archetypal themes and images, drawn from the collective psyche and modified by contemporary cultural obsessions and individual preconceptions.

The UFO phenomenon involves elements that are both rational and absurd, both friendly and hostile. There is no reason to think that there is a single intelligence or consciousness behind it. It is an agglomeration of many things, from spontaneous manifestations of playful elemental lifeforms, to phenomena orchestrated by unseen intelligences, not necessarily benevolent. We are witnessing projections from the multilayered mind of Gaia, of which our own minds are one facet.

The answer to UFO encounters appears to lie not so much in the stars as in ourselves.

Although ordinary humans are unable to predict when or where or to whom the next UFO or alien will manifest, there is nothing accidental about it; chance is merely a word that conceals our ignorance of the real causes. According to the ancient wisdom tradition, we reap what we sow, life after life, and encounter the experiences and challenges needed to help us to recognize and correct our shortcomings and deepen our understanding of nature.

The UFO phenomenon can be seen as a collective intelligence test -- and one that is widely flunked. Like spiritualistic and other paranormal phenomena, it is challenging the modern materialistic worldview. Scientists are being confronted with impossible flying machines that break the laws of physics. The military must often look on helplessly while strange lights circle round their installations and leave their jet fighters standing. Most scientists are happy to dismiss and ridicule the whole phenomenon as it does not fit into their narrow conceptions of reality.

Many ufologists continue to adhere rigidly to the simplistic extraterrestrial hypothesis, even though it fails to do justice to the overall complexity of the phenomenon. Having grown disillusioned with the angels and gods of old, many people now prefer to look to space beings for their salvation, and some join UFO cults that behave like irrational religious sects.

Instead of being extraterrestrials from outer space, 'aliens' appear to be 'psychoterrestrials from inner space', as Michael Grosso calls them.

'Alien adventures,' he says, 'turn into allies for transformation when they ... force us to question our metaphysical assumptions and to revise our workaday maps of reality'.

The UFO phenomenon deserves to be investigated with a critical but open mind. Or as one 'alien' reportedly said: 'You should believe in us -- but not too much!'